The Middlebury Campus

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MEAD LITIGATION EXTENDS INTO SECOND YEAR

Parties weigh mediation, pursue depositions

By ROSELLA GRAHAM
News Editor

It has been 18 months since former Vermont Governor and Executive-in-Residence Jim Douglas filed a lawsuit against Middlebury College for the removal of "Mead Memorial Chapel" from the campus landmark now known as the Middlebury Chapel. In that time, the parties have attended multiple oral arguments, with the latest taking place last week, and clashed in court filings over a proposed deposition of President Laurie Patton, requests for and the relevancy of

The legal action was taken by the Estate of John A. Mead, headed by Douglas, who is serving as their special administrator. They argued that the college breached its contract with John Abner Mead, class of 1864, that it entered when he donated the $75,000 gift to build the chapel in 1914 under the assumption the building would honor his ancestors indefinitely. The college responded in court filings that there was no legal basis holding them to perpetual naming rights of the chapel, and because of Mead's role in promoting eugenics policies in Vermont, the place of worship would no longer bear the family name.

One route to resolving this lawsuit is mediation, which both the college and the Mead estate

Continued on Page 2

DAVID ZHOU/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The Mead lawsuit over the naming of the Middlebury Chapel has been pending in the Vermont Superior Court for over a year.

Center for Health and Wellness plans wellness days, considers student playground

By MADELEINE KAPTEIN & COLE CHAUDHARI
Managing Editors

The Adirondack chairs known and loved by students for enjoying Middlebury's seasonally nice weather may soon face a competitor: adult playground equipment.

Last December, the college announced its plans to allocate an additional $4.9 million to mental health services. Conversations between staff at the Center for Health and Wellness (CHW) and students from Community Council and SGA on how best to proceed with the money have sparked several ideas: the hiring of more counselors, expanded programming and events to support student mental health and wellness, and the beginning stages of an adult playground to be built on campus.

The $4.9 million allocation is thanks to an unrestricted gift from a member of the class of 1959 last fall, arriving at a time when students were especially concerned about the mental health crisis at Middlebury after multiple student deaths. The Senior Committee Gift Team also dedicated the class of 2024 senior gift to mental health initiatives last spring, raising $51,292 thus far. Including this amount, the "For Every Future" campaign has raised $614,353 for mental health and wellness since its public launch last fall, according to Associate Vice President for Advancement and Campaign Engagement Alanna Shanley '99.

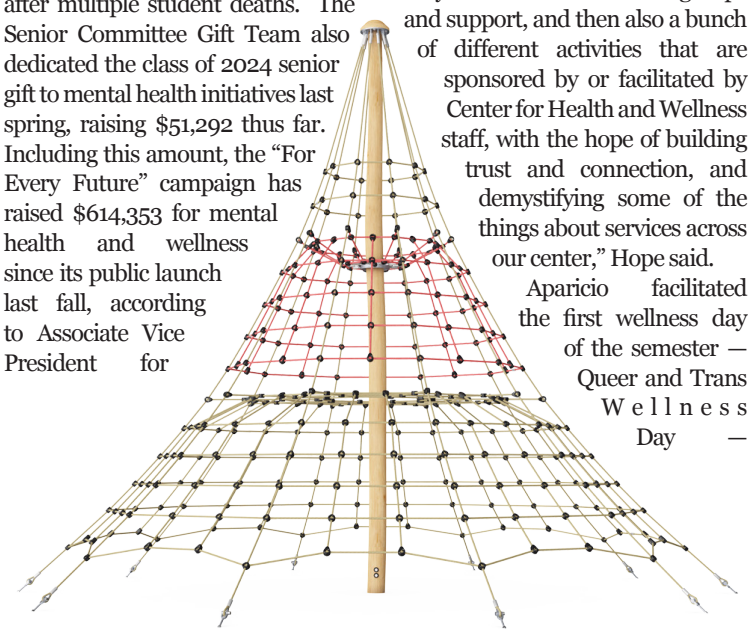
The team reported that they have since hired three new counselors using the gift fund: two contracted counselors who work remotely and one regular full-time counselor working on campus. Alyssa Brown, who identifies as Black, queer and neurodivergent, was hired in February and works remotely with students. Adam Jon-Aparicio, who identifies as a first-generation college graduate and gay Latino man, was hired in April and also works remotely, but has visited campus as a facilitator for wellness days. Sarah Marcus '14, a Middlebury alumnus who identifies as queer, started this fall and works with students in-person on campus.

Brown and Aparicio provided 43 counseling sessions to students in the spring, according to Director of Counseling Tammy Austin. The CHW is looking to fill one additional counselor position, and a program funding stipends for graduate intern counselors to work at the college will launch this semester.

Madeline Hope, director of the CHW's team for health and wellness education and mental health promotion specialist, expanded on the center's vision and intentions for the upcoming wellness days.

"Our hope is that these aren't just isolated where somebody with clinical experience comes, they have that day and then they're gone. They're a combo of some groups and support, and then also a bunch of different activities that are sponsored by or facilitated by Center for Health and Wellness staff, with the hope of building trust and connection, and demystifying some of the things about services across our center," Hope said.

Aparicio facilitated the first wellness day of the semester — Queer and Trans Wellness Day — on Saturday, Sept. 21 at the Prism Center. Hope described some of the special programming for the wellness days that the new



COURTESY PHOTO / KOMPAN

Options for the playground include this climbing element.

Continued on Page 2

CLIFFORD SYMPOSIUM REENVISIONS HOUSING IN VERMONT

By LUKE POWER
Contributing Writer

At this year's Clifford Symposium from Sept. 19–21, titled "Home: Housing and Belonging in Middlebury and Beyond", organizers and speakers engaged in discussions on how to support Vermont communities through the lens of the ongoing housing crises.

The annual Clifford Symposium, named after Professor of History Emeritus Nicholas Clifford, invites members of the college community and local area to explore a different topic at the beginning of each academic year. This year's symposium focused on the idea of "home," especially in relation to the housing shortage in Addison County and Vermont as a whole.

Events ranged from a panel on the history of housing crises with professors from Princeton University and Trinity College to a "Dinner and Discussion" on how we build narratives around home and belonging. There was also a film screening for "Just Getting By," a documentary film by Bess O'Brien about struggling Vermonters, and an early "Brunch for Action" on Saturday.

The idea for this year's theme was inspired in part by symposium student organizers Ellie Cady '25.5 and Freddi Mitchell '25 and their experiences as summer interns with local nonprofit Addison Housing Works. Mitchell described how conversations from her internship shaped the idea for the symposium.

"I was working with two of their board members, Anna Burns and David Hamilton, and they mentioned how they feel like there's sort of a disconnect between the college community and the town community, and over the ideas of housing and home… So we sort of formulated this idea, let's have a big event," Mitchell said in an interview with The Campus.

The organizers envisioned a big event to match a big problem: The housing shortage is putting a squeeze on Vermont; five in every 1000 Vermonters are currently

Continued on Page 2

IDANESI OJIOR / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The Clifford Symposium's Brunch for Action welcomed community members to gather and discuss steps going forward.

MIDDLEBURY WELCOMES NEW FACULTY THIS FALL

By PHOEBE AN
Contributing Writer

As the class of 2028 begins the next chapter of their academic careers, a new cohort of faculty are taking their next steps on their professional paths at Middlebury. This fall, the college welcomed nine new assistant professors in tenured or tenure-track positions to the Middlebury faculty, in addition to other visiting faculty.

Coming from varying backgrounds and experiences with Middlebury, they all bring fresh perspectives to their various departments including Biology, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies, Mathematics and Statistics, Philosophy, and Physics, according to Dean of the Faculty Jim Ralph.

"We have a lively, spirited group of new faculty who bring a wide array of backgrounds that will enhance the experience of our students and enrich our campus," Ralph said in a recent announcement from the college.

Departments are also joined this fall by nine visiting

Continued on Page 3

LOCAL

Eastern Equine Encephalitis comes to Addison County
By LANGAN GARRETT

Ilsley public library turns 100
By DECLAN RICHARDS

▸ PAGE 4

EDITORIAL

Reading the fine print: a call for transparency in Middlebury's construction projects
By THE EDITORIAL BOARD

▸ PAGE 6

OPINIONS

The cost of class: wealth inequality at Middlebury
By HAYDN SUSKE-FUNK

It's time you figure out how much money your family makes
By MAIA McNEILL

▸ PAGE 7

ARTS & CULTURE

A love letter to WRMC
By GEORGIA MILLMAN PERLAH

Mindfulness at Middlebury
By JONATHAN EATON

▸ PAGE 8

SPORTS

Panthers in Focus: Women's golf hosts George Phinney Classic
By JACK McGUIRE

The Side Hustle: Quadball
By MAX MYERS

▸ PAGE 11

Center for Health and Wellness rolls out new programs, plans adult playground

Continued from Page 1

funding has enabled, including inviting a massage therapist, incorporating Dean of Students Joe Russell's therapy dog into student activities, aromatherapy and forest bathing walks. Events on Saturday incorporated these elements, as well as catered meals from Taste of India and Crooked Ladle.

"The hope is that it doesn't feel like a whole heavy day of being in a day long group. The focus is on connection, community, relaxation and some clinical support too," Hope said.

The CHW will host another wellness day for BIPOC students at the Anderson Freeman Center (AFC) on Oct. 19, and is finalizing details for neurodivergent and first-generation student-centric wellness days in the coming months.

Alongside the wellness days and increased funding for counseling, the staff at the CHW are in the midst of designing and finalizing plans for a more community-oriented outdoor gathering space — in the form of an adult playground.

"The way we've tried to approach making use of this gift is to not just make it all about one on one clinical services behind closed doors. It's not just about adding more counselors. It's not just about increasing one specific type of service, but in having lots of different entry points for people to engage with services on a big spectrum," said Associate Vice President for Student Health and Well-Being Barbara McCall.

McCall explained that, when soliciting feedback from students about how best to implement the $4.9 million dollar gift, a common response from students was appreciation for Middlebury's outdoor spaces and the wish for more gathering locations that are available throughout the seasons.

In formulating a plan for a new outdoor installation, the CHW sought voices and opinions from a range of student groups on campus, including members of the Student Government Association, the college's Community Council, Mental Health Peer Educators and a member of Facilities Services who has experience with installing playground equipment. They met with the playground equipment company Kompan to discuss which equipment would be best suited for adults and maximize accessibility to those with disabilities.

Playground equipment that CHW staff are incorporating into proposed designs include swings, permanent hammocks, a spinning disc-like fixture called a "supernova," a rope-based climbing element and all-weather outdoor seating that could be used for classes, group meetings or leisurely conversations. Parkour-style play pieces are also being taken into consideration.

McCall explained that an additional decision that must be made in planning the new outdoor installation is whether or not the campus should have one consolidated adult playground, or a number of them distributed throughout the grounds. Locations the team has considered thus far include next to the basketball courts behind Ross dining, near the new residence hall and behind Forest Hall, just outside the courtyard.

The CHW is working with the college's Space Management Committee to narrow down these choices. Once the CHW finalizes a plan as an addendum to their original proposal to submit to the committee this semester and receives an evaluation and approval, they will determine a timeline for installation.

Looking forward, McCall and the CHW staff are grateful for the flexibility in future programming bestowed by the gift.

"This will be our first full year to say 'here are our priorities, here's how we're utilizing the funding and we may find that we need more or less than we had originally guesstimated, so we can toggle up and down the levels that we need to. And I think it's really good practice. We tend to do this with our gifts, or any funding or projects that are large scale — to reassess them every couple of years. So getting through this first full year will be important," McCall said.

"If we can't do something this year, we can make it a priority for next year, because the money each fiscal year restarts and we have access to a new portion of it. We anticipate that there may be challenges, or we may need to change course, or we may get feedback that influences how we move forward for the following years," McCall said.

COURTESY PHOTO / CENTER FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Dean of Students Joe Russell and his therapy dog, Obi, during a recent student wellness day.

CLIFFORD SYMPOSIUM REENVISIONS HOUSING

Continued from Page 1

experiencing homelessness — the second highest per capita rate in the country. Vermont will need to accelerate the construction of new homes in order to meet growing demands.

"The Vermont Housing Finance Agency said that we need at least 24,000 more homes by 2030, which is not a pace that can be kept up," Mitchell said, referencing data from the Vermont 2025–2029 Statewide Housing Needs Assessment published on Sept. 5, 2024.

The problems addressed last week were personally relevant for some members of the college community. Many staff members at the college face challenges with finding housing in Addison County or even Vermont itself; only 39.5% of employees live in the town of Middlebury, and 21.7% of staff live further than 15 miles away from campus, according to Human Resources data previously shared with The Campus last spring.

Mitchell also shared her hope that students will come to better understand the topic through the numerous events hosted by the Clifford Symposium.

"I think it should allow students to understand that there are basic solutions like building more affordable housing," Mitchell said.

The Charter House Coalition hosted a brunch on Thursday at its location in downtown Middlebury, with food prepared by student volunteers for the guests and visitors as they learned more about barriers to affordable housing in Middlebury. Keegan Gilsenan '25, president of the Charter House Club spoke to the importance of this personal touch to the weekend's numerous panels and addresses.

"I think we often get lost in the statistics, analysis, and arguments, feeling as though they tell the entire story. It is the responsibility of the college and students to remember the individual," Gilsenan wrote in an email to The Campus. "The Charter House Coalition Student Organization revolves around the individual. Our goal is to establish a better connection between the town and college through conversations over food — one at a time."

Gilsenan also highlighted the work of Mitchell and Cady as essential to this year's symposium and its successful weekend of events.

"The housing crisis in Vermont is of utmost importance, and we see its effect in Middlebury on a daily basis. Ellie and Freddi did an incredible job highlighting the individual's experience in the housing crisis," Gilsenan wrote.

A presentation by the development company Summit Properties that took place on Friday morning highlighted the college's direct efforts to create housing. Middlebury College is currently preparing to break ground on a sizable affordable housing project named "Stonecrop Meadows," which will consist of about 250 units dedicated to both low and middle-income individuals, in addition to other units for market rate townhouses.

Middlebury President Laurie Patton, addressing the discussion through a pre-recorded video, discussed the Stonecrop Meadows project at length, framing the need to create more housing as a moral imperative for the college.

Architectural Studies major Annika Milliman '25.5 attended Summit Properties' presentation and the panel discussion "Housing Crises in Context."

"I found these talks so fascinating," Milliman wrote to The Campus. "While I think Stonecrop Meadows is a great concept and will make a difference in the community, I didn't leave the talk feeling particularly hopeful about the future of affordable housing — I think the presentations I went to were a real wake-up call for me in terms of the change that needs to happen and how that change might happen."

Home building projects almost always run into a thicket of regulation, environmental reviews, traffic studies and a number of other considerations that slow down or cancel the proposed project. This is especially true in Vermont, according to Mitchell. She explained how decentralized zoning policy makes local resistance the main impediment to construction.

So how did the Clifford symposium hope to overcome this cultural aversion?

Queue Erica Heilman.

Heilman is the host of the critically-acclaimed podcast Rumble Strip Vermont and was the keynote speaker for the symposium. Her podcast focuses on the lives of everyday Vermonters, often interviewing them in their home or on their job.

Incorporating personal stories of Vermonters with whom she has spoken for the podcast throughout her address, Heilman passionately advocated for greater community strength across Vermont and to prioritize social capital, pointing to community-wide efforts to respond to recent flooding in the state, where people came together to clear debris, fill out FEMA forms and help those in need, as evidence of the power of social capital in Vermont towns.

Yet she fears these bonds may be loosening. Heilman lamented the growing aversion to town meetings as a troubling sign. She explained how she felt the state government wasn't understanding of community level problems and how the "calendar Vermont" image of "covered bridges and skiing" was obscuring the lives of Vermonters.

The stress these issues create led Heilman to say that Vermont's communities "are running on fumes." Her call to action asked for the audience to embrace small interactions with strangers and build a community of trust.

The speech was followed by a Q&A session with questions focused on how to achieve Heilman's lofty vision, in addition to comments praising her work.

While Heilman's speech centered mostly on a call for greater social cohesion and trust, not housing, the themes she shared clearly connected to the symposium's topic this year, leaving attendees with much to think about after the conclusion of events last Saturday.

"The main thing that I hope people take away is that the housing market and home and belonging, they affect us all," Mitchell said. "I think that seeing this can show people that despite our differences and how we experience these topics, we share similar experiences as well, and it can get people reflecting on the people around them."

Editor's Note: Editor in Chief Ryan McElroy '25 and Managing Editor Madeleine Kaptein '25.5 contributed reporting to this article.

MEAD LITIGATION CONTINUES

Continued from Page 1

have agreed to pursue. While this step has not begun, this civil approach holds potential for a truncated and more amicable resolution, according to Douglas.

While the plaintiff's mission in court today remains largely the same — to restore Mead's name to the Middlebury Chapel — Douglas expresses that they are willing to make a few adjustments.

"Several descendants said to me, that if they put a plaque outside that says 'Governor Mead gave money for this chapel, and later on it was discovered that he said something that we don't really like today,' they're okay with that. [That's] more transparency, but, what I object to is erasing our history," Douglas said.

While the estate has looked into other cases of similar nature to compare outcomes, those examples have often resulted in financial settlements, which is not the goal of Mead's descendants, according to Douglas.

"They're not mercenaries," he added. "In fact, they're paying the legal bills, they're making a commitment to this. So that's not what we're after."

In a hearing last Tuesday, Sept. 17, the plaintiff's lawyer addressed the concerns surrounding whether or not Mead's original financial contribution fell under contract or gift law for the purposes of naming rights, according to an article published by WCAX the day of the hearing.

"When you give a charitable gift, a donor cannot go into court and seek to have a court enforce a restriction on a charitable gift. When you give a gift to a charitable organization, you give up any interest in it," said Middlebury College's lawyer Justin Barnard in court last week, according to WCAX reporting. "There's no enforceable obligation for the college to maintain the name on the chapel forever," Barnard said.

"In their wildest dreams, no party to this contract would have ever believed that Middlebury College would have stripped the name and used Governor Mead as a political scapegoat in the year 2021," said Brooke Dingledine, the attorney representing Douglas, according to WCAX.

Following the college's earlier motion to dismiss the lawsuit in April 2023, which was denied on Aug. 4 of that year by the Addison County Superior Court, three other motions from both sides have been filed and are currently pending. The college re-filed their motion to dismiss the lawsuit in addition to filing another motion for summary judgment, prompting the plaintiff to file for summary judgment as well.

Relying on statements and evidence, summary judgment is designed to end the case before it goes to trial by concluding that one side has such overwhelming evidence supporting their case that the court could not reasonably rule for the opposing party.

While the college denied in a court filing from June 2024 "that there was any binding commitment or 'essential term, obligation, promise and condition' to name the Chapel 'Mead Memorial Chapel' in perpetuity," the college acknowledged that Mead personally approved the plans for the chapel, which included drawings of the "Mead Memorial Chapel" plaque above the door.

The Vermont Superior Court filed a decision on July 3, 2024 granting a protective order motion by the college to temporarily delay depositions in the case until the court rules on the motions for summary judgment.

The decision was prompted by the plaintiff's motion on May 1, 2024 to depose President Laurie Patton because of her connection to the decision to remove Mead's name in September 2021. The court declined to find that Patton is not subject to deposition at all, taking issue with the college's arguments that she is irrelevant to the case.

"Middlebury's contentions that she has little relevant testimony to provide is inconsistent with its expressed fear that preparation and deposition time will have a severe impact on her day-to-day responsibilities. And the implication that Governor Douglas may have impure motives in seeking her deposition is speculative at best," the court wrote.

Lawyers for Douglas have also sought the names of individual college employees, in addition to members of Prudential Committee and the working group that they claim participated in the decision making process to remove Mead's name from the chapel. The college strenuously objected to such requests in discovery, stating that it was unnecessary and disproportionate.

"This Request is interposed for the improper purpose of harassing individuals involved in the decision to change the name of the Chapel, and serves no legitimate discovery purpose," the college wrote in a legal filing.

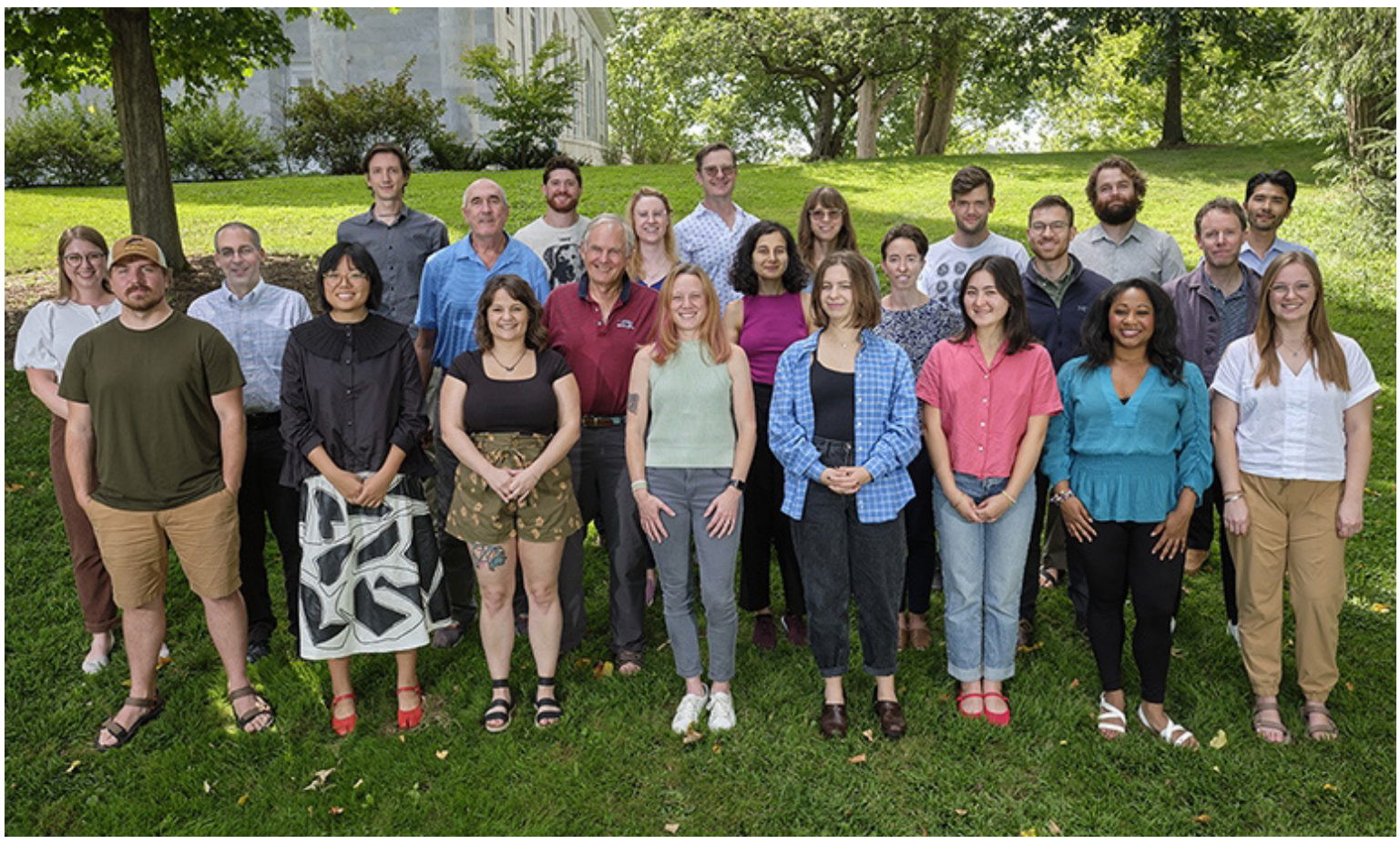
In its recent court filings, the college has firmly denied the relevancy of multiple assertions by Douglas and the Mead estate that point to other members of the college who were tied to eugenics yet have not been singled out for blame. The college also rejected the assertion that Middlebury removed Mead's name "due to a single remark that we a century later deem unacceptable," a reference to the idea of cancel culture which permeates much of the plaintiff's arguments.

Multiple op-eds published by The Campus have been cited by both sides as evidence of the historical record on eugenics; Middlebury recently referred to an op-ed from December 2022 titled "The eugenics movement and institutional memory at Middlebury" as evidence it "has encouraged inquiry and discussion of this period in the College's and State of Vermont's history."

Despite passionate arguments in court and legal motions, there is no immediate closure in sight since the initial filing. The jury — or in this case, Superior Court Judge — is still out on whether this lawsuit will end in summary judgment, mediation or a lengthy ruling.

MIDDLEBURY WELCOMES NEW FACULTY THIS FALL

Continued from Page 1



COURTESY PHOTO / BRETT SIMISON

This fall, Middlebury welcomes several new faculty who bring diverse perspectives and backgrounds.

professors, 13 lecturers and 12 teaching assistants, nine of whom are language teaching assistants in Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

The Biology Department welcomed Assistant Professor Andrew Swafford, an evolutionary cell biologist whose research focus is on fungi's unique sensory system and how it has come to evolve in other species. Swafford is particularly enthusiastic about bringing students into his research.

"I am especially excited to guide students through their first time tracing a real-life gene through millions of years of evolutionary history to find its origin as well as seeing students discover the wild and unique biology of fungi," Swafford wrote in an email to The Campus. "It's truly an amazing time to be a professor at Middlebury."

The Chemistry and Biochemistry Department added three new assistant professors. Assistant Professor of Chemistry Alexandria Bredar comes to Middlebury after completing postdoctoral research at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Bredar's current research focuses on the chemistry of the development of solar cells and batteries.

Bredar told The Campus that her undergraduate liberal arts experience drew her to Middlebury, in addition to its commitment to clean energy and the environment.

"I'm excited to bring my love of energy technology to campus! I'm already so impressed with Middlebury's efforts toward sustainability and climate action on campus, and I hope to bring a chemical science perspective to students and faculty. I'm currently teaching an elective about the chemistry of energy conversion," Bredar wrote. "This was the perfect class for me to begin my career here."

Assistant Professor of Chemistry Emma Guiberson said that she is passionate about chemistry education and making science more accessible for all students. She hopes to use her multifaceted academic background to encourage students to explore the intersection between the sciences, arts and humanities.

"Although we learn science in these silos, in reality, it happens across so many fields at once to answer some of the most interesting questions," Guiberson said. "Science and the arts and humanities don't operate in isolation either, which is one of the reasons I was so excited to work at a liberal arts college."

Having finished her postdoctoral research at Stanford University, Guiberson looks forward to working with Middlebury students to continue studying how human bacteria interact and communicate, specifically looking at the oral microbiome through metabolomics.

Kira Rahn also joined the Chemistry and Biochemistry department, holding a doctorate in analytical chemistry from Iowa State University. Her research lies in electrochemical sensors, specifically developing electrochemical sensors for disease diagnostics.

The Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies department brought in Cynthia Yuan Gao, who received her doctorate in American Studies from New York University. Gao's research revolves around the intersection between 20th-century Asian-American activism and revolutionary movements in Vietnam and China.

The Mathematics and Statistics Department added two assistant professors to the equation: Rose Morris-Wright and Christian Statton.

Morris-Wright was a visiting assistant adjunct professor at the University of California Los Angeles before coming to Middlebury as a visiting assistant professor. After serving two years, she is settling in at Middlebury as an assistant professor. A theoretical mathematician, Morris-Wright's primary research is in geometric group theory, which combines algebra and geometry to study symmetry.

Christian Statton comes to Middlebury with a passion for environmental statistics, having worked for the U.S. Geological Survey as an environmental statistician. Statton is not only eager to teach his courses Introduction to Statistical Science and Time Series Analysis this semester, but also to engage with his students.

"In just the first two weeks of class, I've already experienced several remarkable moments with students," Statton said, adding that many students have already visited him during office hours to explore how statistics can be applied to environmental issues. "I'm eager to learn more about their passions, what drives their interest in statistics and how they plan to apply it in their own research."

As for Philosophy, Tim Juvshik joins the department as faculty following a year as a visiting assistant professor. Earning his bachelor's in philosophy from Lakehead University, master's in philosophy from McGill University and Queen's University, and doctorate in philosophy from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Juvshik now researches metaphysics and the philosophy of technology.

To address a new focus on astronomy and astrophysics at Middlebury, the Physics Department recently created an endowed faculty position in astrophysics, which is now held by Michael Dunham, who holds a doctorate in astronomy from the University of Texas at Austin.

"I am very excited to bring my experience and expertise in astrophysics, particularly in radio astronomy and the topic of star formation," Dunham wrote in an email to The Campus. He also looks forward to developing new astronomy and astrophysics courses that have never been offered at Middlebury.

Studying early stages of star formation, Dunham seeks to understand how stairs gain their mass using remote telescopes around the globe. He is not new to a school like Middlebury, having spent his undergraduate education in a liberal arts environment and working for nearly a decade at State University of New York at Fredonia.

"I strongly believe in the value of a broad liberal arts education, and I'm looking forward to enhancing the ways in which astronomy — one of the oldest scientific disciplines — can contribute to the mission of a liberal arts institution. I'm also very much looking forward to working with Middlebury students, who so far seem thoughtful, intelligent, and eager to both learn new things and teach what they already know," Dunham said.

A strong pull to Middlebury for many of these new faculty is the access to Vermont's idyllic landscape. For some, it is their first New England year, including Guiberson.

"This is actually my first time living in New England let alone Vermont. I'm especially looking forward to some beautiful fall foliage as someone moving from an area without changing seasons," Guiberson said. "I'm also hoping some students will help me as I begin my first attempts at skiing. So if you see me on the mountain, I'm very open to any and all tips from the pros!"

Guiberson is not alone, as Bredar also looks forward to experiencing Vermont winter.

"I'm honestly excited for my first New England winter! That probably sounds a little crazy, but I love snow and did not get to see any snow during my time in the south for the last eight years," Bredar said.

Outside of the mountains and forests, some others look to the fishing opportunities in Vermont. A fly-fishing enthusiast, students might find Statton reeling in brook trout during his free-time.

"In addition to working with such outstanding students, I'm eager to explore the fly fishing opportunities around Middlebury. Fly fishing is one of my passions, and Vermont offers some truly exceptional spots to enjoy it," Statton said.

ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY TURNS 100, CELEBRATES ENTERING A NEW ERA OF EXPANSION

By DECLAN RICHARDS
Contributing Writer

This past Saturday, amidst balloons, flowers and cake, the Ilsley Public Library celebrated the centennial anniversary of its completion and official dedication to Colonel and Mrs. Silas A Ilsley on Sept. 25, 1924. This celebration also marked the start of a new chapter for the library as it moves forward with the Ilsley 100 Project, a major renovation and expansion of the library building. Activities at the event included a Cake Bakeoff, attendees singing happy birthday to the library, a story time for children and a presentation on the history of the library.

Residents of the town of Middlebury passed a bond to support the Ilsley 100 Project in May. Aiming to make the space more accessible, modern and flexible, the project will remove the previous additions to the library from 1977 and 1988 while preserving the historical 1924 building. It will then add a two-story addition on the northeast side of the building and replace some of its critical appliances.

"The Ilsley 100 Project is all about setting up the library to serve the community for the next 100 years. We have a great library, but the building is failing. We cannot provide what a modern library needs to provide in our current space," said Dana Hart, director of the Ilsley Public Library. "As the community's needs change, what we provide changes. The community lets us know what they need and want from us, and then we constantly check in with them to make sure we get it right."

There was an atmosphere of excitement at the celebration, and not just around the numerous kids who ran through the open doors, eager to show off the homemade cakes their families brought for the Cake Bakeoff. Both Ilsley's librarians and community members are looking forward to the structural improvements.

The celebration was a perfect example of what the library offers the community, from the incredibly engaging story time for children led by Youth Service Librarian Tricia Allen to a presentation on the library's history. Middlebury students beginning their work study programs were also present.

The Ilsley 100 Project is primarily driven by the needs of the Middlebury community. The library has served many roles throughout the years and its building's history is a testament to that fact, having seen many small renovations since its founding. However, the current structure has interfered with the programming and amenities that the library wishes to offer to the community.

"The children's area is in the basement, so it is dark, does not have very good views, and is also quite wet," said Joe McVeigh, the chair of the Ilsley 100 project board.

Librarians have limited lines of sight in the children's area and also have an incredibly cramped office space, according to McVeigh. The addition should help to make the librarians' lives simpler while making the space more conducive to fostering a love of reading in children.

The children's area is not the only problem with the current space. The meeting room, also located in the basement, is small and features low ceilings.

Another focus of the Ilsley 100 Project is to make the library more accessible by reducing the amount of stairs that patrons and employees are forced to use to use the building. The project hopes to render the library completely accessible to all who wish to enter.

The planned expansion faces various challenges, especially with regards to funding. A project of this magnitude will cost approximately 17 million dollars, 4.5 million of which will be generated by local taxes over the course of 20 years. Another 2.5 million dollars is expected to come from the government through state grants, federal grants and rebates.

This leaves about six million dollars to be raised through private donations, which are being gathered on the Isley 100 Projects' website.

The renovations the library will implement are subject to financial feasibility. McVeigh shared that the building will feature steel pillars because there are not sufficient funds to pay for wooden ones.

"We are still searching for a place to house our collection during the renovations, but we have a couple options we are really considering," McVeigh said. "The books will probably be located elsewhere on shelves, where we could access them within a day."

The Ilsley 100 Project is expected to break ground in April of 2025 and be finished in July of 2026. During the construction period, the library will be located at a space within the National Bank of Middlebury where they will continue operating.

COURTESY PHOTO / WIEMANN LAMPHERE ARCHITECTS
The rendering for the renovation of Ilsley library, which is expected to be finished in July of 2026.

"Mingle at the Museum" raises funds for future programs and exhibits at the Henry Sheldon Museum

By MANDY BERGHELA
Senior Local Editor

On Saturday evening, community members from the town of Middlebury and beyond gathered in the courtyard at the Henry Sheldon Museum for the "Mingle at the Museum" fundraiser, enjoying a night of live music, dancing, refreshments and a silent auction in support of the museum's future programs and events.

Founded in 1884 by Henry L. Sheldon, an avid collector, the museum is the oldest of its kind in the area. It is dedicated to documenting and preserving the history of Middlebury, Addison County and greater Vermont through exhibits and educational programs, offering opportunities for students interested in research and the archives.

As guests entered the courtyard for the event, they were greeted by balloons and life-sized cutouts of Henry Sheldon and other historical figures from the museum scattered across the lawn. The cutouts were part of a unique minigolf course that was available for attendees to enjoy throughout the evening. The garage in the courtyard was also transformed into a stage, which featured a performance by the rock band Atom and the Orbits, keeping everyone dancing all evening long.

Further into the courtyard, guests were welcomed into a spacious white tent, offering a variety of drinks and charcuterie, generously donated by community partners. Nearby, a rubber duck pond offered guests the opportunity to buy chances to scoop a duck out of a pond, with the potential to find prizes such as free movie tickets and popcorn from the Marquis Theatre, gift certificates from Little Seed Coffee Roasters, and creamees from ShireTown Marketplace.

Coco Mosley, director of the Sheldon Museum, shared her enthusiasm for the evening in an interview with The Campus.

"Tonight is about having a little fun at the museum. It is a fundraiser, and hopes to support the programs and events that happen at the Sheldon as well as taking care of the collection. It really is just hoping to share what the museum can be, which is a place where people can get together and have fun and mingle," Mosley said.

Michole Biancosino, associate professor of Theatre and a member of the museum's Board of Trustees, said she frequently directs her students to the museum as a resource for various art projects, where researchers can explore the eclectic collection of items.

"If I am looking for some weird niche sort of story or idea for an art project, the Sheldon Museum is the first place to start," Biancosino said. "The staff here are amazing and they will always talk to students. I think it is important for my capacity as a professor here at the college and that sort of relationship between my students who want to do research locally."

Ellery Foutch, associate professor of American Studies at the college and president of the museum's Board of Trustees, helped organize the event, which she stated could not have been made possible without the community sponsors.

"We held this event both to raise funds for the museum, but also to raise some energy and excitement around this wonderful, quirky museum community," Foutch said. "We got a lot of community sponsored support. Foley Brothers donated beer, Shacksbury Cider donated cider, along with all the donations in our duck pond."

Inside the museum, a silent auction featured dozens of different items and experiences that guests could bid on, with starting bids as low as $20. Auction item highlights included gift baskets from the Vermont Soap Company, Skida headwear from the Burlington-based business, customizable chocolates from Daily Chocolates, gift certificates from local favorites like the Marquis Theatre and Haymaker Bun Company, along with a one-night stay at the Middlebury Inn.

The rest of the museum exhibits and shops were also open to the guests during the event. Current exhibitions include "From Homespun to Couture" which showcases women's fashion and tailoring from the 19th century, "Patent Pending," which highlights the innovative ideas that originated in Vermont and "Model Boats," an exhibit featuring the craftsmanship of Jerry DeGraff, a Vermonter who served four years in the Navy before working in local building trades.

The museum will have many upcoming events this fall. On Oct. 16, the museum will host an event called "Simple Astonishment" celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Vermont Humanities — a statewide nonprofit organization promoting engagement in the world of ideas — while hosting a community conversation on climate change. There also will be another holiday open house in early December, when the annual Holiday Trains Exhibit will return.

MANDY BERGHELA / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
Fundraiser attendees enjoyed a night of live music, games, and a silent auction all in support of the Henry Sheldon Museum.

EASTERN EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS COMES TO ADDISON COUNTY

By LANGAN GARRETT
Contributing Writer

In an email to the college College Physician and Chief Health Officer Mark Peluso notified community members about the proliferation and potential dangers of mosquitoes carrying Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in Addison County in an email to the college community on Sept. 5. While Middlebury is not currently classified as an area of moderate or high risk, neighboring towns like Vergennes and Cornwall have been designated a moderate risk. Other towns in Vermont such as Sudbury, Colchester and Burlington have been deemed high risk areas.

In the message, Peluso explained that the risk of EEE in non-infected mosquito populations is nearly zero. In infected mosquito populations, the risk of severe infection remains low but still necessitates notifying communities that may be affected. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) considers EEE a rare disease — cases vary in severity, but only a few instances of the disease are reported every year. Peluso also noted that the CDC reports that most people infected with EEE develop no symptoms. However, in August, the Vermont Department of Health reported the first case of EEE in Vermont since 2012 in a man from Chittenden County.

People who do develop symptoms sometimes experience fever, chills, body aches or joint pain, according to Peluso. Symptoms usually last one or two weeks, and most recover completely when there are no central nervous system interactions.

"Approximately 5% of individuals with EEE symptoms can develop neurologic disease involving the brain (encephalitis and meningitis). These individuals can have fever, headaches, vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, behavioral changes, drowsiness, and coma. Approximately 30% of the subset of people who develop severe EEE die from the illness, and many survivors have ongoing neurologic problems. Treatment is supportive care, typically in a hospital intensive care unit. There is no vaccine for EEE," Peluso wrote.

Despite these statistics, most people do not contract severe infections from mosquito bites. In an email to The Campus, Emily Pareles, an epidemiologist from the Vermont Department of Health, provided tips to prevent contracting this disease.

In the email, Pareles advised limiting time outdoors, wearing long sleeves to reduce skin exposure and using an EPA-approved insect repellent, among other measures.

Pareles also emphasized the importance of removing pools of stagnant water near living spaces.

mportant to control mosquitoes at home. Mosquitoes breed in standing water that lasts more than four days. To reduce the number of mosquitoes around your house, get rid of standing water," Pareles wrote.

She noted that the guidance on avoiding the outdoors will remain in place until the first hard frost of the winter season, which kills mosquitoes until the following spring.

According to Pareles, Vermont is not the only state plagued by EEE-infected mosquitoes. She noted that there have been cases of EEE reported in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Hampshire. New York state specifically reported 12 infected horses across 10 different counties.

Emerson Kington '28 shared that he appreciated the communication from the Center for Health and Wellness (CHW) and the ways in which they provided solutions and steps to prevent EEE infection.

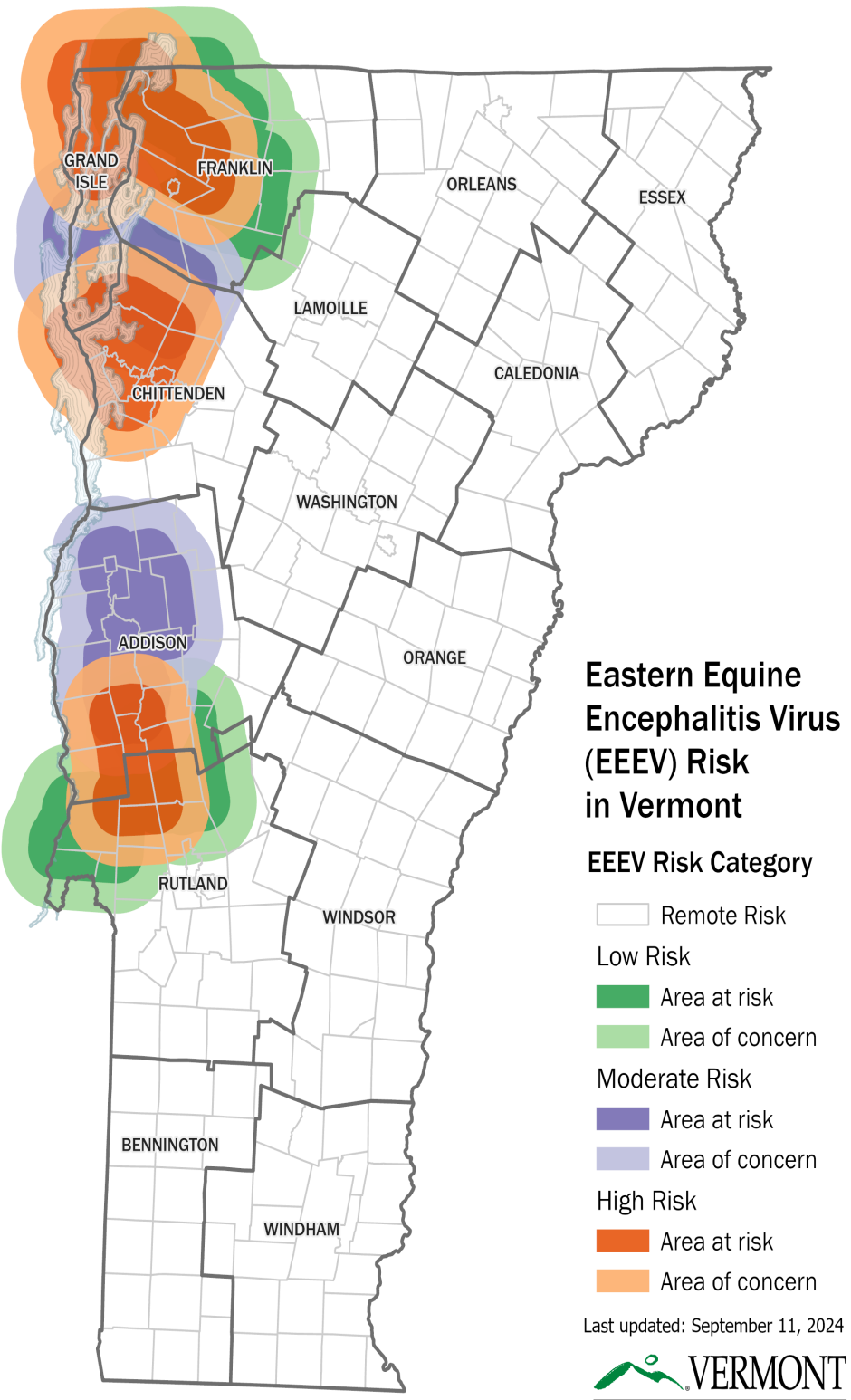
"I understand the risks now, and I think the health center did a good job of laying out possible solutions, and preventative measures," Kington said.

Prior to coming to campus, Kington had not necessarily considered the possibility of encountering mosquito-borne illness, but remembers hearing about similar outbreaks in the past.

"I of course remember when Zika virus was circulating, and some of the other dangers with diseases like the West Nile Virus, and malaria, but I didn't really know a lot about EEE specifically," Kington said.

Other students echoed that same appreciation for the message. Skye Sobel '28 explained that specificity of the safety measures was helpful in reducing some of her concerns in regards to contracting EEE.

"Just giving us all the information we needed to make informed decisions [was helpful]. And, also providing us [with] some possible solutions, like wearing long sleeves and pants, and obviously wearing bug spray and stuff like that," Sobel said. "I think having the health center just be on top of things and being super informed about the local issues in the area is helpful, and I feel better that they can provide us with good data."



COURTESY PHOTO / VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
A heat map displaying areas of risk for Eastern Equine Encephalitis across the state of Vermont.

READING THE FINE PRINT: A CALL FOR TRANSPARENCY IN MIDDLEBURY'S CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

Middlebury is a distinctly rural college. Ensuring a signature bucolic charm while trying to cater to an expanding student population with developing needs is an immense challenge. Hence, as the college prepares to open its new 298-bed, 87,000 square foot first year residence hall as early as this spring, concurrent and upcoming construction projects make us wonder about the future of our campus, not just in terms of its physical space, but in the experience of its current and future student bodies.

The rural setting of Middlebury plays a key role in not only why students choose to apply and enroll, but also in the continuous learning experience from matriculation to graduation. Given Middlebury's remove from larger urban areas, the physical spaces that students have access to should be of paramount importance to the college, its stakeholders and its constituents.

JUNE SU / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The moon rising over Battell Hall, soon to be torn down and replaced by the college's art museum.

The college has proposed the construction of a large new student center and dining facility on the premises currently occupied by Proctor Dining. The new four-story facility, with the capacity to seat 1,200 students, raises questions about the college's character. We want to express our concerns about how this towering structure will impact the culture of our campus. Vermont is not a state known for large architectural projects; it notably does not allow billboards along its roads.

The construction of this new center will inevitably impact life at Middlebury and we have many unanswered questions about what this period will look like: Will other dining halls be temporarily expanded to accommodate the loss of Proctor during its reconstruction? Is it likely that the college will graduate a class that will not have the experience of eating in a Proc booth?

Four stories is quite the imposition for such a small section of campus — students living on the upper floors of buildings on Hillcrest and Hepburn roads may lose access to their views of the Knoll and the hills extending out on Route 125.

We hope the college has considered the impact of this facility on the Energy 2028 initiative, as it will undoubtedly require more energy consumption to fully execute on the various services and operations that will occur within it.

On another note, the upcoming renovation of Stewart Hall is a welcome project and one that aligns with our hopes that the college will become more accessible for students with disabilities and mobility impairments. We recognize and commend the effort to add an elevator in Stewart and replace its windows with those that can accommodate air conditioning units. We hope all future construction projects will maintain this investment in and orientation towards accessible living and working environments for all.

However, we are concerned about the college's quality of communication to current and future students in regards to its construction plans. Many students are unaware of the new plans to renovate Proctor, and we call for a stronger effort on the college's part to make the student body familiar with this and similar projects. Promote public displays of the plans and offer real opportunities for student feedback — and then act on it. Students may be encouraged to contribute if they know the college promised to amend its plans based on student feedback, rather than listening without action.

Speaking of student action, where is SGA in the middle of this debate? The new administration recently declared their goals for this year, which include "free speech on campus," "life skills workshops," and "open communication channels with community partners." These are noble goals, yet they strike us as unambitious and vague to the point of being basically unachievable. We believe the SGA must reassert its voice in the most important debates on campus; we hope that this fall our elected leaders will be asking these same questions to the college that we are raising here.

As an editorial board, we failed to reach a consensus about the college's plan to move its current art museum into a more central location on campus, as the museum currently receives few visitors. Moving it into the space currently occupied by Battell is certainly one strategy to increase student engagement with its collection, yet we do not know if the infrequently visited gallery should occupy such a central location on campus. Alternatively, the creation of new green spaces and outdoor classrooms is a welcome move for students and professors alike who may want to take advantage of trends in warmer weather and the Vermont landscape we all hold so dearly.

We suspect the construction of a new large first year dorm and another large dining facility signals an intended increase in overall student enrollment in the future. If the college intends to increase the number of students on campus — rather than attempt to revert back to pre-pandemic enrollment levels, the target figure of 2,500 students on campus each semester — then this change should be reflected in the admissions material distributed to prospective applicants. Point out the new construction on tours and be honest about the mixed bag — disruptions in the short-term for improvements in the long-term.

Ambitious construction projects and their implementers must take pains to ensure the projects can be safely and sustainably staffed. Visionary, forward-thinking renovations cannot come at the expense of college employees, who are already stretched thin in many areas and have voiced concerns about insufficient compensation in recent years. The college has a decades-long agenda for its physical renovations to the college's campus; we believe it should clarify an equally ambitious plan to prevent placing increased demands on its staff through perennial over-enrollment and ever-higher expectations.

We also call on the college to share more details on how this will affect the granular aspects of student life on campus, such as access to parking lots, which have seen overcrowding in recent years. We wonder if visitors to the new museum will share the Atwater and Allen parking lots with students and how that would narrow student parking options. These may seem like minor concerns, but students spend September through May living, eating and studying at the college; we deserve to know what the college's plans are for our home.

The built environment in which we live — especially when Middlebury is already in such a rural location — plays a crucial, perhaps the most crucial, role in our college experience. As Middlebury moves forward with its large renovations and installations, we call for more transparency on the thoughts and reasoning behind construction projects and involvement of students in planning. Before we agree to any of the sweeping changes proposed by Middlebury, let's read the fine print.

SUSANNA SCHATZ

THE COST OF CLASS: WEALTH INEQUALITY AT MIDDLEBURY

Op-Ed

Haydn Suske-Funk *is a member of the class of 2024.5 and an Opinions Editor.*

My car broke down three weeks ago in Erie, Pa. I loved my 2013 Jetta Hybrid, but it had a lot of problems. The transmission leaked, it was hard to put in gas and the "check engine" light was always on. Still, I was proud of that car because I worked my butt off to pay for it. But when my Jetta and I arrived at Middlebury for the first time almost four years ago, I was flabbergasted by the cars that I was parked next to. I rattled past spiffy Audis and flashy BMWs, wondering how college students managed to pay for such pricey vehicles. Most of my friends back home bought their own cars. It seemed preposterous that parents would give their child something so luxurious — and so expensive.

The wealth inequality present in the college's parking lots is representative of a nationwide trend. In 2022, the wealthiest families held 71 times the wealth of middle-class families, whereas in 1963 the wealthiest families had 'only' 36 times the wealth of middle-class families. Although Middlebury's admissions policy is need-blind for domestic students, our institution consistently ranks in the top 10 U.S. colleges with the wealthiest students. Only 51% of students receive any sort of financial aid, in spite of a sticker price that is rapidly closing in on $90,000. Middlebury has a $1.5 billion endowment and a huge amount of influence; as wealth inequality continues to skyrocket in the U.S., the college must use its financial resources to help uplift more students from lower-income backgrounds.

Middlebury's wealth allows it to support a need-blind admissions process, meaning the college does not take an applicant's ability to pay Middlebury tuition into account in their admissions decision. This motivates students of all financial backgrounds to apply to Middlebury, knowing that they will have a fair shot at accessing one of the nation's elite liberal arts colleges. However, the need-blind process has some drawbacks. Although need-blind admissions is a superior approach to need-aware admissions, it fails to take into account the significant advantages that wealthy students often have in meeting merit or academic-based admission standards.

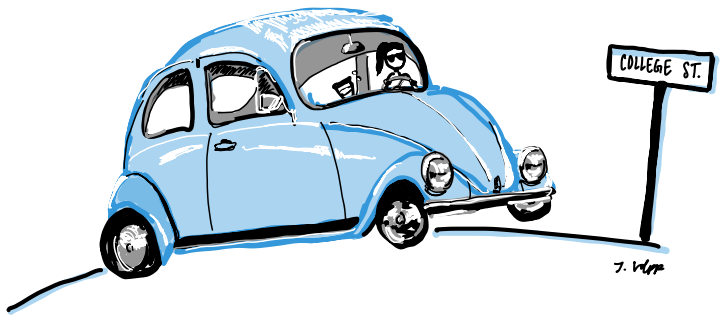
As a low-income student, I did not have access to tutoring, test preparation courses, elite extracurricular activities, and the like. Thus, wealthier students who did have access to these assets are disproportionately represented in our student body due to their ability to build stronger application profiles. Furthermore, Middlebury's long-standing preference toward legacy students reinforces the advantages accumulated by prior generations of wealthy Middlebury families, continuing to perpetuate socioeconomic disparities in admissions. While I am not arguing for the discontinuation of a need-blind admissions model, I am contending that Middlebury needs to more comprehensively address the inequities embedded within its current system.

There are a number of steps that Middlebury could take to improve the representation of low-income students within their ranks. Right now Middlebury's "For Every Future" campaign is attempting to woo first-time financial aid contributors by matching donations up to $10 million. This is a step in the right direction but fails to address the systemic issue: Students from low-income backgrounds have a lower chance of getting admitted to Middlebury in the first place. In a recent editorial, The Campus argued that, in the wake of the ban on affirmative action, Middlebury must redouble its outreach efforts in low-income communities and end the preferential treatment of legacy applicants. I would add that outreach should not consist solely of "showing up" in low-income areas, but should show students how to build an attractive application profile. These steps would allow Middlebury to build relationships with students who may not traditionally consider elite institutions as accessible options.

On a recent Freakonomics Radio Podcast, economist Peter Blair argued that if elite institutions do not expand their study body in proportion to the increase in their influence and financial resources, they begin to function as "luxury goods." Like an Hermès bag or a Canada Goose jacket, the Middlebury bumper sticker on the back of your car serves as a status symbol, reminding others of the prestige associated with attending one of the nation's top liberal arts colleges. Essentially, your Middlebury education signifies not only an immense academic achievement but also a connection to a certain socioeconomic class. Research suggests that the higher the tuition fee a school charges, the higher the future earnings of its graduates; this correlation is even more pronounced for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

As elite universities tighten their belts against an onslaught of ever-more-qualified applicants, Blair argues that schools with the means to do so should increase their enrollment. By de-emphasizing prestige and sharing their resources, I propose that a consortium of elite universities could work together to mitigate wealth inequality, allowing a larger and more diverse pool of students access to social mobility and a rigorous education. Although this step is radical, if Middlebury and its students are indeed committed to social responsibility and compassion, they might consider putting aside their "luxury brand" education in favor of opening doors and closing gaps.

Ironically, after the untimely demise of my Jetta, I am now driving my mom's Prius. It gets excellent gas mileage and requires no extra encouragement when going up a steep hill. I have yet to figure out how I'm going to pay for it. I'm still parking next to flocks of Lexuses and Cadillacs, but I am optimistic that, one day, Middlebury's parking lot — and student body — will be more heterogeneous.



It's time you figure out how much money your family makes

Op-Ed

Maia McNeill *is a member of the class of 2025.5.*

We have a wealth problem at Middlebury. The students here are among the wealthiest people in the U.S., and we don't talk about it nearly enough. Our inability to broach this uncomfortable topic with peers and family hinders us from being authentic people and changemakers. There is a massive amount of money present at the college between the students and their parents, and it's time we mobilize it. This could include attending the workshop with Resource Generation — an organization that helps wealthy young people redistribute money — on Oct. 1 in Axinn 229 from 5:30–8 p.m.

I want you to think about what it would look like for you to give up your wealth.

I had heard that the Middlebury student body was wealthy, but I didn't know what wealth could look like until I came here. I grew up in a part of Vermont where rich meant middle class. I thought rich meant skiing, a two-car household, cable TV and name-brand snacks. When I got to Middlebury, it seemed like everyone had those things and more. As I got to know my first year peers, I found it was normal to go on international vacations and ski trips, or to have a personal car and an expensive bike and computer. Private schools and IB and AP educations were nothing unusual. I met my first friend with a second home and my first friend that didn't apply for financial aid.

I found myself alone in this experience. It seemed nobody around me — not my friends, not my professors and not my classmates — was talking about what felt like, to me, to be the only thing to talk about.

Noticing the wealth of other first years at Middlebury's brought up new feelings about my own struggles. It became harder to understand why my family, like so many, went through what we did. Why were we stuck shopping at the food bank when resources like these exist in such supposedly well-meaning and liberal hands? To watch people who I knew were rich sit beside me in class and speak about inequality and radical change while actively benefiting off of this wealth hoarding fell flat. If my classmates believed so truly in social justice, why weren't they looking towards their own family wealth as a solution? Why didn't they feel like they had material wealth to give? Many of us are unprepared for these conversations and the burden of these questions falls time and time again on working class students.

So let's talk about it.

Dismantling this system of wealth hoarding starts with discussing class privilege more frequently and more directly. I want to be talking about it in classes, in discussions, at dinner, at practice and on vacation. I wonder how much most wealthy students understand their socioeconomic class and its implications. Questions they could be asking including: How do I compare to others? What privileges have I been afforded that others haven't? Do I have a trust fund? What is that? Am I middle class?

These conversations are not just self-exploration activities. We as a community need to get honest about how our socioeconomic class affects our role in the world. Many Middlebury students seem to have moved from one wealthy space into another. In addition to obscuring how uniquely wealthy their lives are, I think this affects people's ability to understand the wealth-hoarding path that they continue to choose. Having wealth is not an apolitical act; we choose it through our careers, our savings and investment choices, our purchases and our complacency with inherited privilege and capital. I wonder if they just don't know how much choice and money and power they have.

If you're reading this and you want to start using that big old money pot, I have some action steps for you.

Ask your parents how much money they have — in investments, savings, homes, inheritance, trusts and cars, for example. What is their gross annual income? It's time you figure out how much money you are a beneficiary of.

Does this number align with your values? What about the source, or what it's spent on? Are you ready to work with your parents to redistribute it? I'm not talking about traditional philanthropy; that relies on continued class inequity. I'm talking about doing what you can to help dismantle class inequality while you have unique access to funds. Wealth redistribution is a pivotal role for wealthy social justice advocates.

Fortunately, we don't have to figure this out all by ourselves! Organizations like Resource Generation exist to help wealthy young people understand their class privilege and redistribute their wealth back into the community. There is a movement of people who are fighting against the "wealth defense industry" and who have used their wealth to support their communities. I know these processes are complex, difficult, multi-party and multi-year affairs that cross cultural taboos and navigate family dynamics. No conversation or process will look the same. It is not an easy or straightforward process, but I hope that the people who feel like this is a possible step to take will take it.

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THE CUSTOMER IS WRONG: MIDDLEBURY IS FAILING US BY LISTENING TO US

Op-Ed

Gage Schrier *is a member of the class of 2024.5*

Over the course of this semester, a group of Super Senior Febs and I will publish a series of op-eds detailing what Middlebury used to be like and what it could be. We hope to provide a similitude of institutional memory. We have conducted hours of interviews with alumni, professors and students, and we plan to conduct dozens more. Throughout our research, it has become increasingly clear that something within our great school is wrong. Our culture, traditions and support for curiosity have decayed over the past decade. I leave in January; all I can do now is write. However, the Earth belongs to those who live upon it: For those of you with more time left than me, I aim to impart to you that you deserve more than what Middlebury is offering. You deserve what they promise: a liberal education.

The number of people who are reconsidering the value of college has grown considerably over the last decade. Many Americans balk at four years of spending rather than four years of earning. Colleges, including Middlebury, have responded by adding computer science and data science courses that appeal to students who view college as a pathway to high-paying jobs. Those students' assumptions, in fact, are not entirely accurate, and Middlebury still slid in the infamous U.S. News rankings. Critical thinking is a marketable skill. However, regardless of major, one comes to Middlebury expecting an elite liberal arts education, and as I will argue in the first entry of this series, because of our school's responsiveness to career-anxious and incurious students, we have failed to deliver on that promise.

Originating in classical Greece, liberal arts education consists of two parts: quadrivium and trivium. The former comprises arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music; the latter grammar, rhetoric and logic. Notably, vocational curriculum is absent, and students study all disciplines. Sound familiar? In true liberal arts education, no student mistakes the part for the whole — that is, the attainment of specific knowledge for the greater good that is the ability to order one's soul. By this, I simply mean that the telos of pursuing a liberal education is understanding the world and the self. Middlebury recognizes this, saying its purpose is preparing students "to solve the world's most challenging problems…by engaging them in the life of the mind and soul." However, we do not live up to our potential in this regard because we do not take the intellectual life seriously.

As Middlebury searches for a new president, we must demand the leader shift our institution's culture and curriculum toward a radical embrace of education. Rather than adding vocational classes, we should focus on our strengths: languages, social sciences and the humanities. The world needs actuaries, lawyers and coders; they are professions worthy of praise. Still, large universities provide fantastic opportunities for vocational education. There is no need to make Middlebury like every other college, because, frankly, we are not nearly as good at teaching computer science as the 8th-best state university in California, and, well, we cost a lot more.

The liberal arts do not include skill-first classes because their primary objective is not to impart how to understand the world, only how to change it in accordance with other's ideas. Philosophic education is no career death. Top law schools like Yale University often spend relatively little class time teaching the practice of law; instead, they teach the philosophy of law and the ethics of practice. Even without devoted class time, students at elite institutions still pass the bar exam because they are capable. Students from schools like Middlebury and, if I dare compare us, Yale Law, are better prepared to serve as "ethical citizen[s]," because we know what ethics are and why they matter. Praxis, the practical application of theory, is a part of liberal arts, but only when its final goal is to impart something higher than the skills itself.

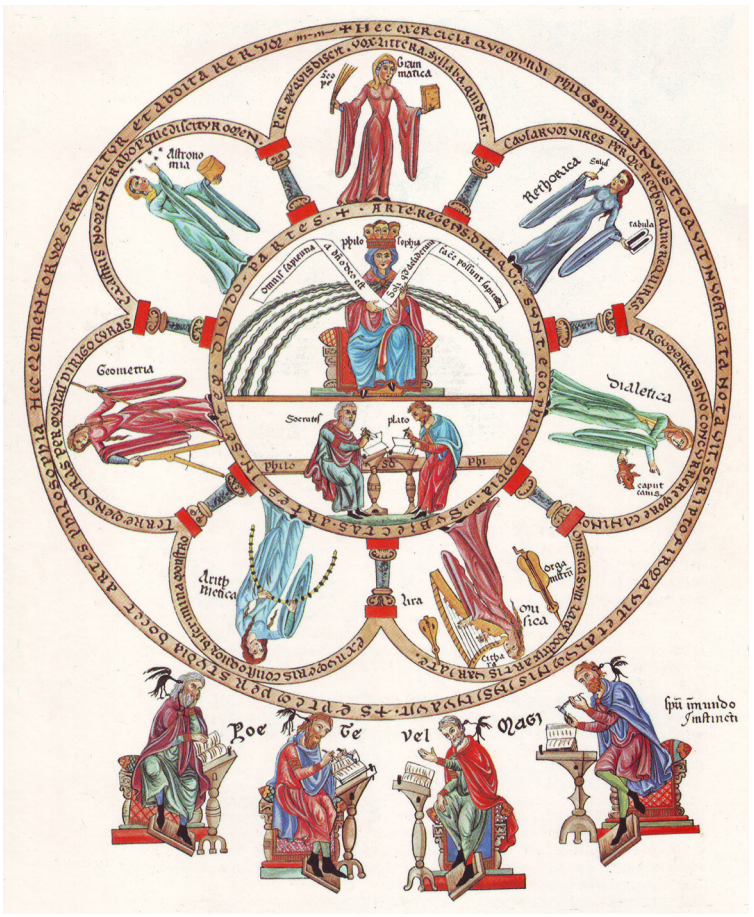
Many will ask: Can we not do both? Do I need to draw such a hard line? Is lessening the intellectual burden on students by reducing credit requirements or devoting class time or an entire department to pre-professional skills, such as computer science, a net negative? I respond that no credits were added to make up for these changes. The telos of Middlebury as an institution is the production of virtuous, intellectual people. This takes time. Just like a trade, a particular education — an education of the soul and mind — is best suited for the successful development of these individuals.

An education that truly stretches the mind — that objective upon which these Artes Liberales are founded — is and should be uncomfortable. Formulating our culture and curriculum around student's intellectual safety and pleasure is antithetical to our purpose. As Plato, the father of liberal arts, said, students must be dragged from their caves; only through pain can our minds open. We must be presented with Charles Murray and Ryszard Legutko every day, not because we must agree with them, but precisely so that we can disagree successfully. Our failure to invoke protest is just as grave as our attempts to control it. Liberalism and justice grow stronger with critique and die in ignorance. One does not know or believe anything until they seriously consider alternatives.

If students are unwilling to accept discomfort in service of knowledge, liberal arts may not be their place, and that is okay. The wonderful thing about having 5,300 colleges and universities in the U.S is that intellectual exclusivity in our institution is not a societal harm. Our duty is to attract students who would benefit the most from a Middlebury education. There is no shortage of intellectually curious students across all strata of society.

Private college is a business, or so I have heard. Students demand x, and the administration must give them x or risk that future students' $86,850 won't come. Responsivity to students is not entirely bad. Still, I caution that believing students', or worse, administrators' comprehension of education trumps that of professors' is, irony noted, troubling. Watching Middlebury spend thousands of dollars on bingo prizes and sex-toy raffles and simultaneously attempt to remove professorships in the English department was difficult. We must devote ourselves entirely to our purpose, education. The truth about what is good in the world is not responsive to supply and demand. If we have trouble filling our halls with those who want to be here for the sake of being here, then we must sacrifice the back row for the purpose. It is with this I believe that the next head of our ship of state mustn't be a professional fundraiser or executive but a liberal arts professor.

Learning as a vocation is leisure. It is the greatest opportunity many of us will ever be afforded. We must take a brave stand in support of it.



COURTESY PHOTO / WIKIPEDIA

SPECS PANTHER #1: Raising awareness for men's sexual assault

SPECS Panther is a mascot for SPECS (sex-positive education for college students) and serves the Middlebury community. As a part of Health & Wellness Education, SPECS Panther seeks to educate and spark independent dialogue, not be the end-all be-all resource on campus. We encourage Midd Kids to break down the walls of silence by engaging in sex-positive conversation — wherever, with whomever and about whatever is most comfortable, easy and safe for you.

Op-Ed

Finn Davis *and* **Sophie Schuele** *are members of the classes of 2027 and 2025 and SPECS Peer Educators.*

Sexual violence is a critical safety concern for colleges, representing the most common type of crime on Middlebury's campus, according to the 2023 Annual Security and Fire Safety Report. Eighty-one percent of women and 43% of men reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment and/or assault in their lifetime, according to a 2018 national study. The #MeToo Movement, which went viral in 2017, was a milestone towards normalizing the conversation around sexual violence. Since then, public awareness of the prevalence of sexual violence — especially targeting trans, POC, non-binary and female-identifying people — has increased, according to the Pew Research Center. Still, more must be done to hold perpetrators of sexual violence accountable, offer resources and support to survivors, and to prevent further violence.

We also need to re-emphasize that sexual violence is sexual violence, no matter the gender of the victim. For self-identifying men — inclusive of any and all definitions of that identity — unique societal barriers obstruct their access to counseling and ability to process their unwanted sexual experiences. Due to dominant conceptions of masculinity, internal and external stigma and shame are pervasive, often resulting in delayed or ineffective treatment. SPECS is therefore committed to highlighting this largely unspoken, highly stigmatized topic.

According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, sexual violence is defined as any unwanted sexual contact, including "words or actions of a sexual nature against a person's will and without their consent. A person may use force, threats, manipulations, or coercion." Coercion can include wearing someone down by repeatedly asking them to engage in a sexual act until they give in, the presence of uneven power dynamics, external social pressures or even emotional manipulation. Examples of manipulation can include phrases like: "Oh, so you don't love me?" or "If you don't want this, it makes me insecure" or "But you were fine with this last time." Understanding the scope of sexual assault is crucial for Middlebury, as the U.S. Department of Education's Campus Safety Survey data reports that more than one in ten students experience sexual misconduct on their college campus each year. In reality, incidents of college campus sexual misconduct are likely much higher than reported figures.

But the question remains: Why is reporting instances of sexual violence more difficult for men?

Several societally-upheld myths about sexual violence pose barriers to speaking out. Often the narrative around sexual violence is, understandably, centered around female-identifying victims and male-identifying perpetrators. While it is an undeniable fact that women are statistically more likely to experience sexual violence, this messaging can insinuate that men cannot be sexually assaulted and that women cannot commit sexual violence. In fact, a 2018 national study found that 30% of male victims reported experiencing sexual violence by female perpetrators. One way to avoid these generalizations is to consider rephrasing discourse on consent to be gender-inclusive.

Another misconception about sexual violence is that if one experiences some physical signs of arousal (such as an erection, ejaculation, climax, etc.), then the encounter must have been consensual or pleasureable. However, physical signs of arousal do not indicate consent, as they are only physiological responses to external stimuli (referred to as arousal non-concordance). The assumption might be made that a man is "supposed" to want a sexual experience, even when consent is not explicitly given. Male-identifying individuals often struggle to acknowledge that they have experienced sexual violence due to societal messaging that they ought to want sex. An additional consideration is the danger of either blaming queer-identifying victims for their own assault or classifying perpetrators as queer aggressors.

At SPECS, we uphold that if there is ever a doubt about whether a sexual encounter is consensual, stop and have a conversation with the involved party. This can get especially confusing when substances are involved. Someone may not outwardly seem overly intoxicated, but could still be unable to consent. If there is any lingering question as to whether they are in a state to properly consent, waiting until another time is always the best choice. In a tricky situation like this, slow down and consider how you can positively contribute to upholding a culture of consent on campus. Perhaps you can walk them home, find one of their friends or give them your number for another night.

Avoid using minimizing language such as "that can't happen to men," "but did you enjoy it?", "you're putting too much blame on them" or "you put yourself in that situation." People process unwanted sexual encounters differently, whether through anger, silence, denial, humor or other outlets. Especially avoid assumptions and judgemental statements like "if it really happened to you, you wouldn't be talking about it that way."

At SPECS, our foundational aim is to provide education that enables people to contribute to a safer community on Middlebury's campus. A primary goal is to destigmatize and remove shame from speaking about sexual experiences for everyone. Sexual violence is universal, can be initiated by anyone and can be prevented by anyone. As Midd Kids, we all have a collective responsibility to hold ourselves and each other accountable and to create a culture of consent and healthy communication on our campus and beyond.

If someone you know tells you about an unwanted sexual experience, direct them to any of the following resources. On-campus options include MiddSafe (802-377-0239), Health Services (802-443-3290: SANE nurses, usually same day appt), Counseling Services and anonymous general reporting to Title IX/Civil Rights Office. For the Town of Middlebury, refer to the Atria Collective (802-388-4205) or Porter Emergency Room (802-388-4701: SANE nurse).

A LOVE LETTER TO WRMC

By GEORGIA MILLMAN PERLAH
Contributing Writer

When I think about college radio, I don't think of lanky guys in beat-up Doc Martens or outcasts who desperately try to convince you that "no, vinyl is never going out of style." When I think about college radio, I don't think of snobs who boast hundreds of thousands of listening minutes on Last.fm because Spotify Wrapped is too 'normy' for them. When I think about radio, I think about home.

As a self-conscious first year, I went to my first club fair and was immediately overwhelmed by the countless options. I put my name down for women's rugby despite never having caught a ball in my life (I did not go to a single practice), I signed up for a legion of mailing lists and interest meetings, but it was the indie rock thrumming from the WRMC table that drew me in like a magnet. WRMC board members presided over the fair from the very front table like royalty from a throne — I was hooked. I don't think I had ever wanted to be someone as badly as I wanted to be those seniors manning the WRMC table. I grew up surrounded by music, going to festivals with my family throughout my childhood and slowly but surely finding and perfecting my own taste. Despite how little I knew about the college, I felt that WRMC was the right choice.

Programming happened over the Fall Family Weekend and my painfully unoriginal firstshow idea — yes, it was road trip themed — landed me the coveted 1 a.m. Wednesday night time slot. But I was committed, and despite my Thursday morning 8 a.m. first-year seminar, I did not miss a single show.

I found myself going to WRMC's general meetings, known as Gen Board, every Monday at 5 p.m in the Gamut Room and getting to know some of the untouchably cool upperclassmen. I worked on my playlists all week in preparation for each upcoming show. I went to social events, I put myself out there, and just like that, I found my community on campus.

Since that first 1 a.m. slot, I have had a radio show every semester I've been on campus. I've even held multiple positions on the executive board from social media manager to programming manager, and now, at long last, general manager. I could not part with my radio show even during my rainy junior spring at Oxford University, where I joined Oxide radio and learned that even across the pond, college radio is still cool. But it isn't as awesome as WRMC.

Because the only prerequisite for joining WRMC is a love for music (or talking), being in this organization has given me the opportunity to meet many of Middlebury's most interesting students. College radio helps me feel connected to the student body in so many ways — WRMC shows me what kinds of music people are listening to and to share the music I love with others. It gives me the space to be that obnoxious girl who uses Last.fm and professes her love for Radiohead without judgment. Most importantly, college radio has given me a safe space on campus to be heard and to listen to other students, on and off the air.

So, now I have made it to the gilded club fair throne, I have become that radio senior I imagined transforming into during my first semester. More than that, I have found some of my best friends on campus, listened to countless small artists, gone to concerts by myself simply because I wanted to hear new music, brought bands to campus, designed posters and formed a stronger sense of self, all because I signed up for WRMC my first year fall and stuck with it.

WRMC has helped me become a leader, it has helped me grow as a person and a friend. It has introduced me to people from every corner of this campus and has given me the best home at Middlebury I could ask for. As general manager this year, I can only hope to continue the legacy that WRMC has held for 75 years. If you have been sufficiently convinced by my love letter to the radio station, our All DJ meeting is this Thursday, Sept. 26 at 7 p.m. in Wilson Auditorium for anyone interested in running a show this semester.

COURTESY PHOTO / GEORGIA MILLMAN PERLAH
Georgia Millman Perlah '25 sits at the soundboard in the studio.

A case for Beyond the Page's "The Strangers' Case"

By VIRGINIA FRAU
Arts & Culture Editor

On the evening of Sept. 18, Middlebury's own Beyond The Page presented the original play "The Strangers' Case," a tender and personal reflection on migration, strangerhood and home. The play was put on by a five-person rotating cast and took inspiration from the speech by the same name, largely attributed to William Shakespeare's "Sir Thomas More."

Upon entering the theater Wednesday night, one felt as if the tone had already been set. Two rows of chairs were arranged in a semi-circle in front of the stage and audience members were encouraged to fill the forward-most seats first. In the space left in the center, a folding table sat with snacks arranged atop, which drew spectators and players alike in the twenty minutes leading up to the show. In this intimate, familiar atmosphere, the line between the audience and the actors blurred. What was coming depended on more than the typical 'audience-participation' expectations, and in fact, already had.

The play was devised following a community workshop held on Sept. 11. in which Beyond The Page invited participants to share their experiences and perspectives on topics like homecoming and dislocation, familiarity and strangeness. These contributions thematically and textually informed the resulting piece — at various times, actors would read aloud direct quotes transcribed from the workshop from their scripts, which were on hand for the duration of the performance. These sections were mainly penned by NYCS-based actor Haley Schwartz.

"Largely we found that the community material spoke for itself. We also made a conscious decision not to overwhelm the show with tales about migration, home, and strangerhood that didn't come up during the workshop. Those themes are extremely broad and ever relevant, and we wanted to honor them by being as specific and true to the community as possible," Maddison Middleton '22.5 said. A show of hands after the show revealed that around half of the audience had participated in the workshop the week prior.

On the night of the performance, Craig Maravich, program director for Beyond The Page, provided some preamble to the performance and introduced his fellow actors including Middleton, Schwartz and Shelley Fort. Then, actor and lead playwright Louis Reyes McWilliams discussed the titular speech that served as the performance's basis. The speech references the London riot of 1517 — known as Evil May Day — and denounces the rioters for their violence and hostility towards the immigrants in the urban fabric. It beseeches the rioters to consider how they would feel, were they ever to become 'strangers' themselves, cast by circumstance onto an unknown shore: "Would you be pleased / To find a nation of such barbarous temper, / That, breaking out in hideous violence, / Would not afford you an abode on earth."

Just before the show was to begin — in a move that felt somewhat ominous — the house lights were turned up, illuminating the audience and the stage together. And when Maravich began to recite the titular speech, he was interrupted after only a few lines by Middleton. Middleton's portrayal of a disoriented newcomer signaled the real start of the show. As Middleton recalled vague but poignant memories of a life they seemed to have left behind — including exclamations of "ancestors", "a tune on the wind", "food! looking for food," and "a TJ Maxx!" — an understanding grew between them and Maravich.

In the next couple of scenes, a rhetorical shift occurred when Maravich, offering shelter and sustenance to Middleton, took on the literal role of "Dad." The two navigated the unique connection between a parent and child who evade each other in fundamental ways. Years passed and Middleton grew old enough to set out on their own, accepting their father's wisdom that while home would always be there, coming back would never be the same once they'd left.

Scenes later, a grown-up Middleton returned to find their father lonely, scared and suffering from memory loss. In the time that had passed, the two had been rendered strangers to each other once more.

As the show proceeded, a few central motifs and stylistic embellishments emerged and helped to situate the audience within the piece. Scene transitions and stage directions were read aloud by an actor and the storyline was regularly paused to engage the audience in filling in the sentences, "I arrived here by way of..." and "I know I'm home when..."

One of the most visually thrilling parts of the performance was the multi-person "creature" that formed on stage, snarling and growling and whining and rolling about, representing the fear sometimes conjured during an encounter with a 'stranger.' Strangeness, it proffered, was a universal symptom of relationships, not a personal condition. It could be altered, eradicated, by simple acts of compassion and kindness.

Another notable moment was an absurdist and seemingly improvised dance sequence to "People Are Strange" by The Doors. "I loved getting to see people enjoy being strange," said one audience member in the feedback session after the show.

The play was beautifully written and deeply profound, rife with both emotional, tender moments and wide-ranging comical relief. Every acting performance was superb and fully-embodied; the cast managed to establish an intense sense of trust with their audience. It served as a refreshingly non-topical reminder that, by virtue of each being strangers, none of us are truly alone.

Stepping out of the stream: Mindfulness at Middlebury

By JONATHAN EATON
Staff Writer

The morning sun beams through my window while my alarm clock blares. I jump out of bed and into the shower with my 9:45 a.m. class on my mind. I grab my books and stuff my worn-out backpack with a random assortment of pens I grab from my desk. Did I understand the reading? Will I have an insightful question for our class discussion today? Do I need breakfast? Will it be 80 degrees again? My mind is ablaze with thoughts like, "I must get going, I must get to class, I must not be late." I reluctantly step outside into the torrent river of impetuous Middlebury students.

But this morning was different. Instead of stepping into the cascade flowing from Ross to McCullough, I found a calm eddy amid the campus's hustle and bustle. There was no current, no sharp rocks and no raging waterfalls — only seven cushions, seven seats and seven souls.

The Crest Room, located on the second floor of McCullough, is a sanctuary safe from the rapids of campus life. The sun radiated across the green carpet and bounced off the beige-colored walls and simple furnishing. We slipped off our shoes and put down our bags behind a shoji room divider, freeing our shoulders and emptying our minds. The seven of us — a mix of sophomores and juniors — sat in a circle.

For fifteen minutes, I let down my guard and forgot about my responsibilities, my worries and my readings. I focused only on my breath and counted to ten on each inhale and exhale. I felt a cool rush over my body as my muscles slowly relaxed. Each breath rejuvenated a new part of me, like a mental factory reset.

The facilitator, Sophia Calvi '03.5, Director of Programs Sustainability & Environmental Affairs, slowly struck her chime, calling everyone back. We all opened our eyes and smiled as if waking up from a deep slumber. Everyone appeared recharged and ready.

"Having dedicated my life to dreaming into holistic futures, I know that our collective and individual wellness is essential," Calvi wrote in a message to The Campus. "The path to wellness looks different for everyone. I meditate alone to ground myself and connect. Using the breath as an anchor throughout my day, brings me back to the present moment. I meditate in groups because it allows me to deepen the knowledge of our collective interconnectedness and interdependence."

It was incredible how something as brief and straightforward as closing my eyes and breathing deeply could so quickly alleviate the everyday stress, expectations and responsibilities I carry with me as a Midd student. My upcoming international political economy class and the 300 pages of reading I had to do no longer felt as intimidating.

"I come to the meditations every day Monday through Friday. I feel like being in college is being a little hamster in a hamster wheel spinning and spinning and you never get off the wheel," said Victoria Perez Hidalgo '27, a regular meditation participant. "When I meditate, I feel like I get off the wheel and for a moment I am just being in my body and not caring about anything else and that's a really special space."

I began attending the morning meditation session because I needed a new wellness routine. I like to swim three mornings a week, but recently I felt as though I needed another way to cool down and reset. Before attending that morning session I had never really considered the power of meditation.

"I have not been meditating for too long, just a couple of months, but I kind of feel like in the morning it's like how people go on runs or go on walks," said Ernesto Augustine Gallego '27, another meditation participant, in an interview to The Campus. "It's just a great way to center yourself and have a positive outlook on each day and remain calm through extremely stressful times."

Every week, the Scott Center offers similar daily 15-minute meditation sessions from 8:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. in the Crest Room, as well as a 20-minute session with Dean of Religious Life Mark Orten on Wednesdays from 12:00 p.m. to 12:30 p.m. If you are looking to broaden your meditation horizons, there is a meditation space available on the second floor of the Davis Family Library and an outdoor labyrinth at the Knoll. Though the tide of everyday pressures is strong, meditation is a great practice to help students feel less awash in Middlebury's currents.

COURTESY PHOTO / SCOTT CENTER
The Scott Center hosts spaces for meditation.

Coming to terms with MJ Lenderman

By COLE CHAUDHARI
Managing Editor

On Sept. 6, MJ Lenderman released his fourth studio album, "Manning Fireworks", thereby rekindling a period of stormy indecision about my feelings towards his music and writing.

This record comes on the heels of 2023's "And The Wind (Live and Loose!)", a delightfully exposed live album that, when I first spent time with it, planted me on Team Lenderman with a firm (albeit measured) sense of resolve.

And so, just under a year later, while acquainting myself with "Manning Fireworks", I feel strangely conflicted. I think this is the album Lenderman aspired to create, but I'm not certain that it — and, by extension, he — is as deserving (at the moment!) of the level and volume of starry-eyed critical acclaim that has been accruing around his figure in recent months.

With all reservations about the efficacy of "genre" as a useful mode of description aside, Lenderman descends from the Songs: Ohia strain of alternative rock — more precisely, in its alt-country formulation — where along the way he has transmuted influences fwwrom Neil Young, Palace Music, Sparklehorse and, perhaps most obviously, the late David Berman of slacker-rock archangels Silver Jews, without whom the idiom of Lenderman's lyrics probably would not exist in the way that it does.

He's not the Neil Young for Generation Z — Neil Young is the Neil Young for Generation Z; let's not delude ourselves — but I do agree with positioning him in conversation as the Jason Molina for the generation who missed out on Imogen Heap, but has Caroline Polachek. That seems fair.

COURTESY PHOTO / MJ LENDERMAN
Album cover of "Manning Fireworks," MJ Lenderman's fourth studio album.

"Manning Fireworks" begins rather quietly with "Manning Fireworks", a warbly and balladic ditty that serves fairly well as a titular abstract for the record. Lenderman, beginning in the epistolary mode, addresses the faceless, lamentably one-of-many figure who occupies the mainstage of the record's lyrical attention: Someone who "sneaks backstage to hound girls at the circus", a 'baby'-turned-'jerk' now relegated to shamefully "Standing close to the pyre, manning fireworks."

Lenderman also ushers in biblical references, namely original sin, offering us a moral prism and a common religious interface with which to examine the record's clear preoccupations with ignominy and romantic failure.

The following track "Joker Lips" is this album's great achievement when it comes to the careful engineering of instrumentation and sound. "Joker Lips" provides the single-best pedal steel tone I have ever heard. It evades the shinier, shallower gleam of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young's deployment of the instrument (c.f. "Teach Your Children") in favor of an even blurrier, even warmer quiltedness; I think of First Aid Kit's heartrending "Emmylou" or "Have You Forgotten" by Red House Painters as existing in a complementarity with this particular hug of noise.

My complaint with "Joker Lips" — and much of this record — lies in its lyrical register: "And you know I love my TV / But all I really wanna see, is see you need me." This would be a good line if it wasn't so trite, so heavy-handedly committed to distinguishing between the plainly disabling material world and the antimaterial craving for being deemed necessary in the life of another.

Beguilingly unimpressive lines of this order are found hither, thither and yon across the plateau of the three attending songs: "Rudolph" lands on the refrain "I wouldn't be in the seminary if I could be with you"; Wristwatch features "I've got a beach home up in Buffalo" (this one is a near-perfect pastiche from Frank Ocean's "Thinkin Bout You") and "I've got a houseboat docked at the Himbo Dome"; "She's Leaving You" instructs the eminently masculinized loner to "Go rent a Ferrari / And sing the blues / Believe that Clapton was the second coming." In some sense, this record assumes the garb of a meditation on how to self-parody to the point of fatigue.

My working theory about the flurry of praise around his lyricism is the following: After David Berman's suicide in 2019, the indie rock community was left reeling from the loss of its dazzling poet laureate who held the title in a relatively uncontested fashion since 1994, when the Silver Jews record "Starlite Walker" was released. The hunt began for Berman's successor, and the commentariat seems to have converged on Lenderman, in all of his partial, seasonal cleverness, as a candidate. This feels hasty.

It would be much easier to write off "Manning Fireworks" as merely good but lyrically flimsy if the record ended at "Rip Torn", which, naturally, it cannot do.

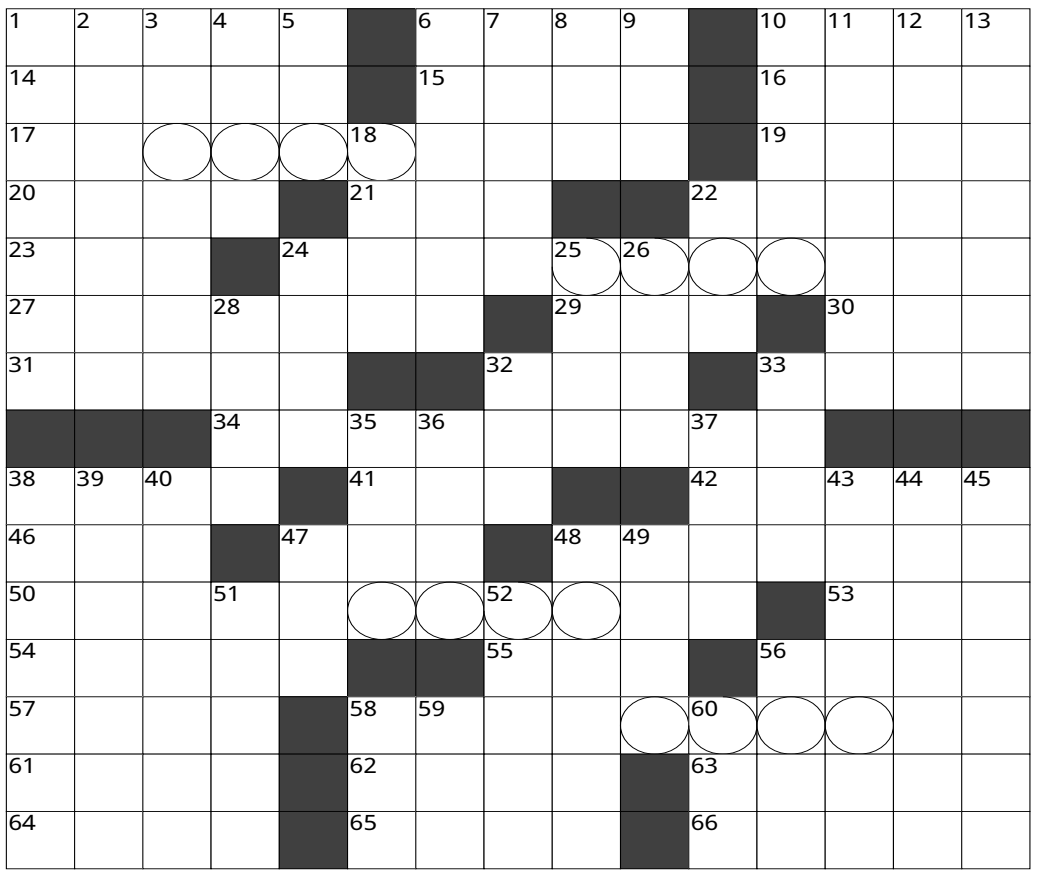
Tracks 7 and 8, "You Don't Know The Shape I'm In" and "On My Knees", display a more earnest confessionalism, where the perennially misguided and pining subject of prior tracks assumes a twofold posture, first of forthright admission — "But I know sometimes we just drift apart" — then of humble repentance: "Oh, wherever you find me / You'll find me on my knees."

The final song, Bark At The Moon, the longest on the record by a wide margin, delivers what is perhaps the album's enabling concession: "You're in on my bit, you're sick of the schtick / Well, what did you expect?" It's not a foundational misalignment of selves that led our wandering loner away from a successful romance and into the clergy, but the clash between an earnest presentation and the (often errant) hunt for a sustainable identity.

Though I find the narrative trajectory spun in the journey between "Manning Fireworks" and "Bark At The Moon" a bit ramshackled, I admire Lenderman's gesture towards an unbosoming in the concluding minutes of the record. It stood, and continues to stand, athwart my expectations of the album's broader aspiration, where the purveying of a serious emotional contemplation is always filtered through witty, gratingly tongue-in-cheek modifiers. The quiet voice of the altar boy Lenderman once was, in the childhood he once had, persists.

Despite my conceiving of this record as a concept album inspired by the pandemic-era images of priests baptizing infants with water guns loaded with holy water, I take a kind of solace in Lenderman's refusal to carry the shtick, as it were, all the way to completion; his subtle insistence that it is possible — like the pairs of people in "You Don't Know The Shape I'm In" disembarking from Noah's Ark — to exist, however briefly and with whatever levels of lonely remorse, in the world of the redeemed.

Brat Fall Final



ACROSS
1 Takes video
6 Ski lift
10 Son of Odin
14 Old enough
15 William, to Charles
16 Surrealist artist Magritte
17 Sad safari secretion
19 School before Midd.
20 Sleep symbols
21 Dear
22 Smallest European Union country
23 Unwell
24 Much ado about something
27 Kind of coordination
29 Old email company
30 Merriam-Webster's comp.
31 South-Asian garments
32 Season in the fall and winter?
33 Means justifiers
34 Artist at the heart of this puzzle and this summer
38 Close (up)
41 "Wassup!"
42 Rice dish
46 Water regulator, abbr.
47 Barnyard sound
48 "Assuming even that..."
50 Bony beasts
53 NBA legend Ming
54 Between, en français
55 "I'm coooooold"
56 Kaine and Walz, for two
57 Luke's sister
58 Sets precisely
61 "___ saw Elba"
62 Sword seen in the Grand Palais at Paris 2024
63 Wash away
64 Mend, as socks
65 Ingredient that becomes its storage location when "er" is added
66 Sound finding?

DOWN
1 Belonging to a certain muppet
2 "You don't have to convince me"
3 Useful instrument in a stockroom
4 Bosses, for short
5 One could be Red, Black, or Yellow
6 "Out with ___"
7 Moneyballer Billy
8 Raise
9 Transportation with Xings
10 Ice cream, say
11 Imp or brat, say
12 Like a sloth having a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day
13 Sends back down, as for reconsideration
18 What was
22 Swanson of 2024 Olympic soccer fame
24 "Walk the Line" artist
25 Southeast Asian island known for resorts
26 Sauce thickener
28 Bumpkin
32 Soar
33 Stage direction, with a direction
35 Infamous captain
36 Patoot
37 Some accountants, for short
38 Raized
39 Tennis post-1973
40 Ocean's 8 Jeweler
43 Flatter
44 Oakland county, locale of many a Mythbusters test
45 Pre-brushing tool
47 Insect with a roughly 36-day lifespan
48 "Gave it my best shot"
49 Phineas' brother
51 Put in the work
52 More fit
56 Tropical root vegetable
58 Comic block
59 Cit. format
60 Hi-___

MIA FELDMAN WINS NESCAC PLAYER OF THE WEEK AS WOMEN'S SOCCER STARTS SEASON STRONG

Mia Feldman '27 dribbles up the field.

COURTESY PHOTO / WILL COSTELLO

COURTESY PHOTO / MIDDLEBURY WOMEN'S SOCCER

Feldman pictured in the center celebrating with teammates.

By TING CUI
Sports Editor

Mia Feldman '27 of the women's soccer team has earned NESCAC Player of the Week after a stellar weekend on the field. She notched five points from two goals and one assist, tying her for fifth in the NESCAC standings.

"It was a team rather than individual effort, but I just got lucky enough to have a good weekend," Feldman said in an interview with The Campus. "It felt great to score against a nationally ranked team and then score a game-winner in another game."

In Saturday's 2–0 win over Trinity, Feldman's goal in the 15th minute sealed the victory. On Sunday, the forward contributed both a goal and an assist in a thrilling 2–2 draw against fifth-ranked MIT.

For Feldman, success is a team effort.

"We have an amazing dynamic. I wouldn't have been able to do this without my supportive teammates and coaches," she said.

That support is mutual. In an interview with The Campus, midfielder and forward Abby Ward '25 recalled early-season conversations with Feldman about her struggles with confidence, and excitement about her future prospects.

"To see Mia go to the next level, to play like herself that weekend, I was really happy for her," Ward said. "A sign of being on a really special team is that your teammates' triumphs are also your triumphs."

The chemistry Feldman and Ward describe is one of the key reasons behind the team's promising start to the season. After a challenging year in 2023, when the team failed to qualify for the playoffs, the Panthers seem to have found their rhythm again.

"Last year was a disappointing season," Ward said. "People are not discouraged, they want it even more. I think that says a lot about our character as a team that one season does not define us."

Undefeated with a record of 3–0–3, they have already shown significant progress. The team opened the season with a 1–0 victory over Clark, followed by a hard-fought 1–0 win against Hamilton. Their third win came in the form of the 2–0 victory against Trinity, a game that saw Feldman shine.

Despite their strong start, the Panthers know there are still challenges ahead. They earned a well-deserved 2–2 draw against an impressive MIT team and held Amherst to a scoreless 0–0 tie in a defensive battle. Most recently, Middlebury tied Wesleyan 2–2 in what Ward described as their "first disappointing result" in a game that could have gone in their favor.

How the team responds to the Wesleyan setback on Wednesday night against UVM is crucial. Last season, the Panthers were plagued by a series of ties and struggled to handle difficult outcomes, succumbing to the pressure. This year, they need to prove that they can bounce back and maintain their momentum when faced with tough results.

Despite the challenges, the Panthers remain optimistic about what lies ahead.

"We're still undefeated, and that's something to be proud of," Feldman said.

The Panthers have set their sights on making the playoffs — a goal that eluded them last season — and possibly winning the NESCAC title, which they last claimed in 2021.

"We're taking it one game at a time," Ward emphasized. "But it's always in the back of our minds."

With a home game against Connecticut College up next on Saturday, the Panthers have an opportunity to continue their strong season and maintain their momentum.

"There's just a feeling this year that good things are happening," Feldman said. "I didn't see that last year, but I see it now. We can do amazing things."

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PANTHERS IN FOCUS: WOMEN'S GOLF HOSTS GEORGE PHINNEY CLASSIC

By JACK McGUIRE
Senior Sports Editor

Panthers in Focus is a column that showcases student photography to give a better depiction of the triumphs of Middlebury's athletes.

This past weekend, the women's golf team came in fourth place in the George Phinney Classic. The 11-team tournament is one of the few opportunities the Middlebury women's golf team has to compete on their home course. Overall, the team put up a score of 630 points, bested by totals put up by Wellesley College, Williams College and New York University. Morgan Lee '26 led the way for the Panthers putting up a two-day score of 153, tying her for sixth place overall at the tournament.

The rest of the team shot well to ensure the team's placement in the top half of the teams. Captains Audrey Tir '25 and Mia Politano '25 kicked off a good start to their senior seasons with solid days at their home course. Tir tied 9th place overall while Politano scored in the top half of competitors in her last home tournament.

"It's been my home course for seven years, honestly, since I grew up in the area, so for that to kind of be my last tournament, at home, my last competitive one at least at home, it was definitely pretty sentimental at the end," Politano said.

Last season, Lee and Tir made the all-NESCAC first team, and the top ten performances from both of them today shows a continuation of the duo's dominance. The team also saw impressive performances from some of their younger golfers. Ella Han '27 and Lemona Xu '28 golfed for Middlebury's "B-Team" at the tournament and had performances they can build off of, placing 21st and 25th overall respectively.

The tournament was a continuation of the team's solid performance so far this season. At the Polar Bear Shootout hosted by Bowdoin College, the team came in fifth place of the 13 teams competing. Tir placed third in the tournament overall while Lee came in a tie for 12th place.

"We got off to a really strong start, and we have a great group of girls that are coming back. So we're just very excited for the season," Politano said.

The women's golf team is set to continue the fall portion of their schedule this weekend as they travel to Williamstown, Mass. this weekend to compete in the Williams Invitational.

DAVID ZHAO / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

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Morgan Lee '26 (left), Audrey Tir '25 (top right) and team captain Mia Politano '25 (bottom right) compete in the George Phinney Classic, where the women's golf team placed fourth out of 11 teams. The team will travel to Williamstown, Mass. this weekend to compete in the Williams Invitational.

THE SIDE HUSTLE: QUADBALL

By MAX MYERS
Contributing Writer

Middlebury Quadball competes this past weekend at Brandeis. COURTESY PHOTO / FIA BOFFEY

Welcome to The Side Hustle. Inspired by ESPN8: The Ocho — ESPN's annual segment where the sports network highlights more obscure sports — this column highlights the sports that The Campus typically reports on less frequently... until now.

Quadball — a sport from the Harry Potter series that Middlebury College students were the first to bring to the collegiate level — has become an institutionalized club sport on campus. The team, which has around 15 consistent athletes, gives Harry Potter fans the ability to live out scenes from their favorite books while also burning calories.

While the sport is referred to as "Quidditch" in the Harry Potter series, the team officially changed its name to Quadball in 2022 for a variety of reasons. Most prominently, J.K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter books, made a number of transphobic tweets, leading governing bodies in the sport to search for a new name.

With the sport in a precarious state, the vibrant fan community took matters into their own hands and officially created the moniker Quadball.

Middlebury's quadball team makes sure they go about their business with a mix of seriousness and silliness. While the team has an appealing flier that asks potential participants if they want to run around with a stick between their legs, they also also have a regimented practice schedule for their 3:30 meetings on Battell Beach every Monday and Wednesday.

The team's "Dumbledore" is Josh Harkins '25, the club's treasurer who plays the beater position, a role that involves throwing balls at opposing players to "knock them out of play." As a veteran of the team, Harkins has found a role as a mentor to fledgling first years. Although he can get physical in rivalry matches against Williams and Amherst — Quadball is a full-contact sport — he is gentler to his own teammates in practice. One of the reasons he and his teammates love quadball so much is its mix between severity and levity.

"It's a perfect mix of a serious and goofy sport," Graydon Hanson '25 said.

Quadball is co-ed, requiring all genders to be on the field during play. To Harkins, this embodies the harmonious spirit of the sport.

Katie Barbera '28 is a first year student who was a big fan of Harry Potter growing up. Having played soccer and flag football in high school, she is no stranger to the intensity that Quadball requires. Barbera brings depth to the team as a chaser, hoping to make a difference this season on the field.

The team greets outsiders with smiles and their own PVC pipes (they don't use brooms). After each practice they huddle up and scream "Quadball!" as loud as possible.

The team has a busy year ahead of them, and Harkins and the team have been training rigorously for the tough schedule. There are four or five round-robin tournaments each semester, including the National Qualifying round and Nationals in the Spring.

This past weekend the Quadball team started the year on an excellent foot, going 3–0 at a tournament at Brandeis University where they beat UVM, Tufts and Vassar. On Oct. 5 they will host their own tournament here at Middlebury, where they will host Emerson, UVM and a Middlebury and UVM combined alumni team. There will be food trucks, local businesses and an immersive opportunity for kids to get to know the sport by playing "kiddich."

PFL WEEKLY

PFL is back! On today's week one episode, we discuss our inheritance of the Panthers For Life Podcast and what it's like taking the reins of this exciting journey. We break down the latest news in Middlebury sport and preview what's to come. Women's Soccer players Mia Feldman '27 and Stella Espinasse '27 joined us in the studio for an exciting interview. We dove into the team's remarkable turnaround from last season and explored everything from the world of soccer to life beyond the field! We rounded out the interview with a heated draft of Middlebury dining hall items. Thanks for listening!

TWO MIDDLEBURY SKIERS RENAMED TO U.S. NATIONAL TEAM

By JACK McGUIRE
Senior Sports Editor

Kjersti Moritz '28 and Erik Arvidsson '21 are set to be a part of the 2024-25 Stifel U.S. Alpine Ski teams.

This is a prestigious honor. The governing body of snowsports, U.S. Ski & Snowboard, only selects the most qualified candidates who provide the greatest chance for the U.S. to win medals in future World Championship and Olympic Winter Games. The team looks at a number of international rankings and results from head-to-head competitions to make their selections.

Stever Bartlett, head coach of Middlebury's Alpine ski team, noted that both skiers made the team despite recovering from ACL injuries in previous seasons.

"I wouldn't say [it's] a total rebuilding year, but, you know, it's definitely a challenge," he said. "The beginning of their year is going to start a little bit slower [for them]."

Arvidsson will compete on the U.S.' B-Team. This marks his sixth year on the Stifel U.S. Ski Team, where some of his most notable achievements include coming in eighth place at the Saalbach downhill World Cup, placing 14th at the Aspen World Cup super-G and coming in 16th place at the Bormio downhill.

Arvidsson was a star at Middlebury. In 2018, he was an NCAA All-American and was the EISA Rookie of the Year. In both of his other two years competing for the Middlebury ski team, he made the EISA All-East First Team.

Moritz, meanwhile, will be competing on the U.S.' developmental team. The developmental team represents the top of the junior developmental pipeline and is designed to help talented young skiers progress in their careers. This year marks Moritz' second year on the team. Throughout her career, so far, her most impressive accomplishments include five top ten finishes in the North American circuit.

As a first-year student, Moritz has yet to begin her Middlebury Alpine skiing career. However, she is also a defender and midfielder for the women's soccer team, making her one of the most unique athletes at the school. So far this season, Moritz has logged 35 total minutes played in two games of action.

In today's day and age, being good enough to play collegiate soccer and any other sport, doesn't matter if it's a D1 sport like skiing, or if it's another D3 sport, Bartlett said. "It's pretty remarkable with how specialized everybody is now in sports, so her soccer ability is tremendous."

Middlebury's Alpine Ski teams have had no shortage of top-tier talent in recent years. Arvidsson and Moritz' selections continue the trend of skiers with international pedigrees competing at Middlebury. In 2022, Michel Macedo (Brazil) '23, Ali Nullmeyer (Canada) '24 and Sam Wood (U.S.) '19 all competed at the Beijing Winter Olympics. Wood won a gold in the Paralympics mixed relay along with a silver in the Paralympic slalom and long distance as a guide for his lifelong friend Jake Adicoff.

Outside of international competition, Middlebury's Alpine team is primed for a strong season this year. Last year, the team finished in third place out of the 14 teams competing at the EISA Championships. Standout performers Bradshaw Underhill '25, the runner up for the giant slalom at the EISA Championships last year, and Mika-Anne Reha '25, who finished in sixth place in the slalom at the NCAA Championships last year, are both returning for this season. With the addition of Moritz, the Panthers are in a good position to continue their dominance in skiing.

"I think the girls will be right in there. They'll win carnivals. We'll have a good team for NCAAs," Bartlett said. "And the guys, I think we're returning our strongest guys from last year, which is good, and we have three first year guys that have raced in Europe and or at the academy level."

Kjersti Moritz '28 and Erik Arvidsson '21 were both named to the U.S. ski team. COURTESY PHOTO / USA SKI AND SNOWBOARD (LEFT) AND MIDDLEBURY ATHLETICS (RIGHT)